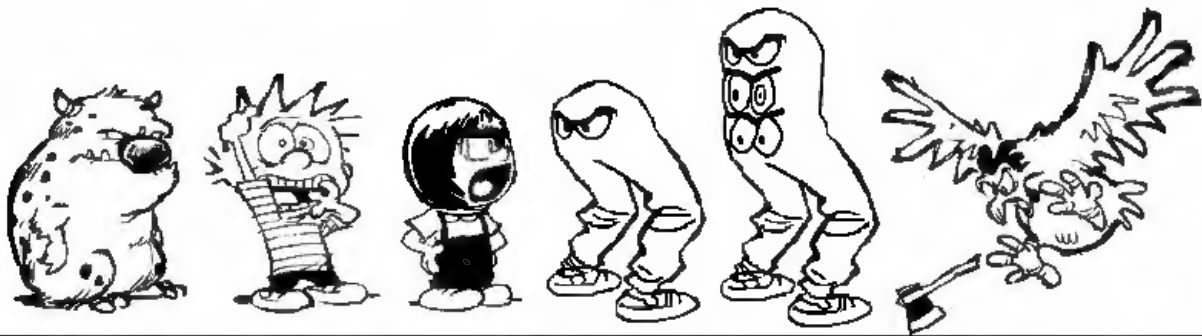


CALVIN THE ELDRITCH CULTIST

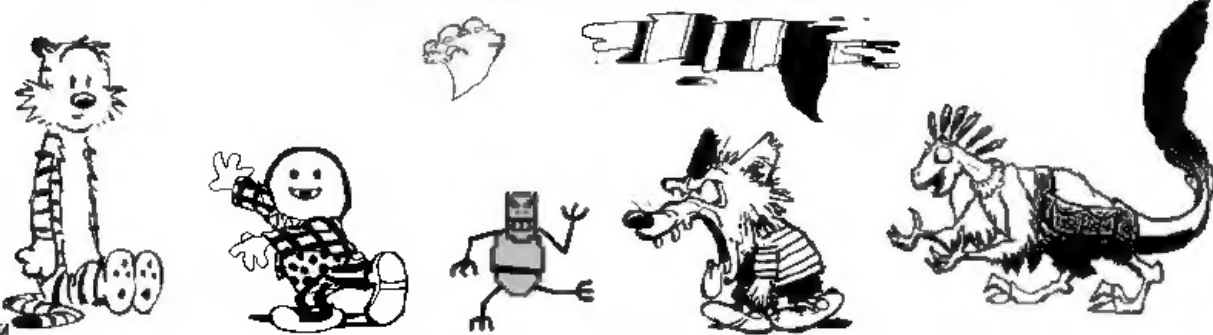


CALVIN THE ELDRITCH CULTIST



Chris Pirih

CALVIN THE ELDRITCH CULTIST



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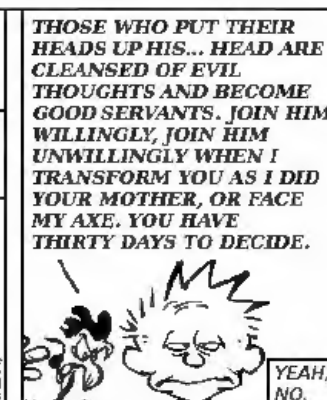
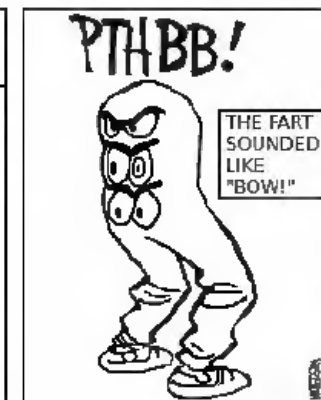
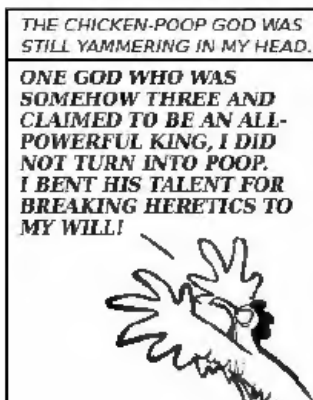
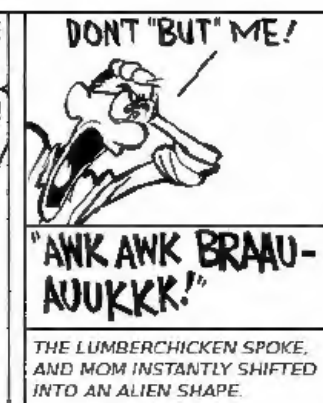
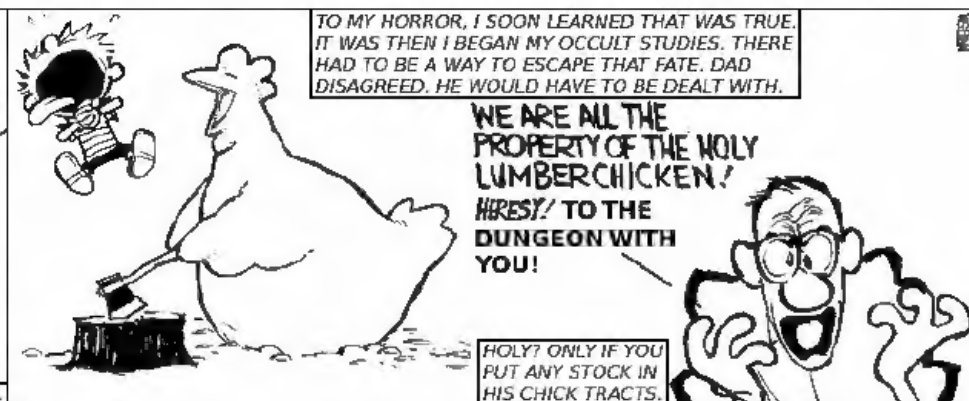
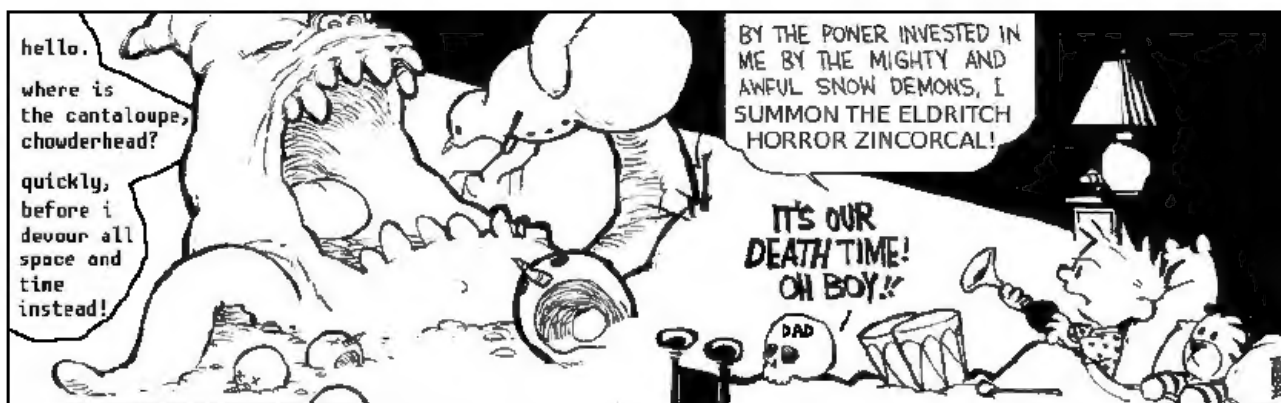
Episkopos Vorloth the Gridelin, Active Nihilist

2024-2025

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THE LUMBERCHICKEN'S GOOD SERVANTS? HAH! HE COULD STICK THEM BACK WHERE HE GOT THEM. BUT I STILL HAD TO LEARN ABOUT THEM.

OTHER THAN THE **STINK**, HOW CAN YOUR BUTT-SERVANTS HARM ME? THEY HAVE NO ARMS, AND RUN BACKWARDS!


SERIOUSLY, WHAT JUVENILE MIND WOULD THINK OF THEM?



I'LL LET WHAT USED TO BE YOUR MOM SHOW YOU. AND SHE'S ONE OF THE WEAKEST ONES.

DEMONSTRATE YOUR TRUE POWER!

BZZZNAARRRGG!



WAAAAH!



BAM!

TELEKINESIS. I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED. GOOD THING THAT THE DUNGEON CEILING WASN'T SPIKED.

I NEEDED TO FIND SOME ALLIES, AND FAST.



MY BUTT-VICEROY COULD PULL MARS OUT OF ORBIT AND CRASH IT ONTO THIS DUNGEON, IF I ALLOWED IT. BUT ALL INMATES ARE TO SERVE OR DIE BY MY WILL ALONE!

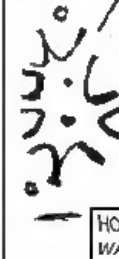
"I OWN YOU, EVERYONE HERE AND TRIPLE-GOD-TURNED-TRIPLE-BUTT-VICEROY." YEAH, YEAH.



CONTEMPLATE YOUR FUTURE AND MAKE YOUR CHOICE, PUNY MORTAL. I HAVE OTHER THINGS TO DO.

AND THE VISION FADED FROM MY MIND.

HOLY SCHLAMOLY, IT WAS FINALLY OVER.



ASIDE FROM LANDING BACK ON THE GROUND. RIGHTING MYSELF, I NOTICED ONE PERSON STARING AT ME. NOT A BUTT-PERSON. AN ORDINARY PERSON.

THUMP!




MY NEIGHBOR, SUSIE. EXCEPT SHE'D MOVED AWAY A FEW YEARS BACK. I'D SEEN THE MOVING VAN. WHAT WAS SHE DOING HERE?

AND WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HER EYE?



SUSIE! IT'S BEEN TOO LONG! HOW HAVE THE TROPICS BEEN SINCE YOU MOVED THERE? AND WHAT'S WITH THE EYE?

YALDABA WATCHE



I'M NOT SUSIE. SUSIE'S MY IDENTICAL TWIN SISTER. I'M SARANNA. YOU KNEW SUSIE?

WAIT. WHAT?



AND DON'T ASK ABOUT THE EYE. I'LL TELL YOU IF I HAVE A REASON TO TRUST YOU.

OR IF YOU MEAN THE EYE ON THAT POSTER, IT WEIRDS ME OUT.



YES, I KNEW SUSIE. SHE NEVER SAID SHE HAD A SISTER.

BECAUSE I DIDN'T GROW UP WITH HER.




SARANNA: I WAS ALWAYS MORE OF A REBEL THAN MY SISTER.

IT'S A SNOW WOMAN.




CALVIN: SUSIE DID THAT TOO! SARANNA: DID THE CHICKEN GOD OBJECT? CALVIN: NO...

YOU HAVE BROKEN COMMANDMENT 11: THOU SHALT BE ASHAMED OF THY NATURAL ANATOMY!




SARANNA: HE OBJECTED TO EVERYTHING I DID, OR SO IT SEEMED. OUR PARENTS SENT ME TO MY COUSIN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COUNTRY. THEY WERE AFRAID THAT SUSIE WOULD START DRAWING THE CHICKEN GOD'S NOTICE, TOO, AND THEY'D LOSE BOTH THEIR DAUGHTERS TO HIM. THEY HAD NO COURAGE, BUT I ENDURED. IT WAS AWFUL.

ARGH!



YOU HAVE BROKEN COMMANDMENT 32767: THOU SHALT NOT EAT GUMMY BEARS BY RIPPING PIECES OFF DIFFERENTLY-COLORED ONES AND SWAP- PING THEM LIKE GUMMY DR. FRANKENSTEIN BEFOREHAND!

CALVIN: IS THERE ANY OTHER WAY TO EAT THOSE?! SARANNA: I KNOW!



WHAT ARE YOU IN HERE FOR? IT OBVIOUSLY ISN'T BECAUSE A GOD HAS IT IN FOR YOU, RIGHT?

HERESY.



EVERYONE HERE IS IN FOR THAT! WHAT KIND OF HERESY?

YOU WON'T EVEN TELL ME ABOUT YOUR EYE! WHY SHOULD I SPILL THAT?



POINT. THE CHICKEN GOD WANTS US ALL TURNED AGAINST EACH OTHER. I'LL TELL YOU.

OKAY.



ALTHOUGH I DO HAVE A GOD HOLDING A GRUDGE AGAINST ME, IT'S NOT THE LUMBERCHICKEN.

WHAT? WHO?

YOUR STORY FIRST.



SARANNA: MY COUSIN TREATED ME AS LITTLE MORE THAN A SERVANT, AT LEAST IN PRIVATE. IN PUBLIC, SHE WAS THE **BEST SURROGATE** MOTHER EVER, TAKING IN THE LITTLE REBEL OUT OF THE **GOODNESS OF HER HEART**.



HMPPH.

CALVIN: YIKES. SARANNA: YEP. AT LEAST SHE LEFT ME ALONE OFTEN ENOUGH TO DO HER OWN THING THAT I COULD LOOK FOR A WAY OUT OF MY SITUATION.

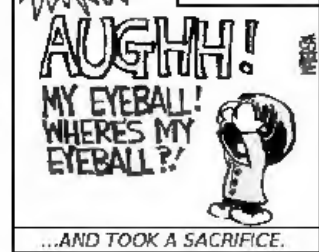


WE LIVED MUCH FURTHER NORTH THAN MY PARENTS AND SISTER, SO SNOW WAS A LOT MORE COMMON. AND ONE DAY, THE SNOW DEMONS BEHIND IT CALLED ME WITHOUT WORDS, OFFERING ME ONE WISH. I WANTED SIGHT BEYOND SIGHT, SO I COULD LOOK BEYOND THE FOUR WALLS OF THE HOUSE I WAS SO OFTEN TRAPPED IN. THEY GRANTED IT. CALVIN: WOW. HOW'D IT WORK?

SLIPPIN' RIPPIN' DANG FANG ROTTEN ZARG BARG-A-DING DONG!

AUGH!

MY EYEBALL! WHERE'S MY EYEBALL?!



...AND TOOK A SACRIFICE.



SARANNA: EVEN THOUGH THE EYE WAS GONE, I COULD STILL SEE OUT OF THE SOCKET. IT WAS NOW A SPIRITUAL EYE, THE SNOW DEMONS SAID.



REALITY, WHICH WAS SO SOLID BEFORE, WAS NOW AS FRAGILE AS SNOWFLAKES COMING IN FOR A LANDING, AND WITH MY NEW EYE, I COULD SEE THROUGH IT WHEN I WISHED. IT WOULD ALSO KEEP OTHER PRYING EYES AWAY. I ASKED HOW, AND THEY JUST LAUGHED.




GAAH!

THE NEXT TIME THE CHICKEN GOD FORCIBLY LOOKED MY WAY, I LEARNED WHAT THEY MEANT. HE WAS FORCED TO LOOK AT A SNOWY LANDSCAPE UNTIL HE WENT SNOW-BLIND. YOU HAVE NOW BROKEN COMMANDMENT... FEEEEEEHHHHHHH!




THIS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE! I AM GOD, GOD, GOD!

HE TRIED AGAIN WITH A TRIPLE-BUTTED ABOMINATION, BUT IT WAS MORE VULNERABLE, AND GOT SNOW-BLINDNESS AND FROSTBITE.



PHBBTBBT. EEEEEEE NOT MY SERVANT, TOO!

SO YOU CAN'T BE SPIED ON, EITHER BY THE LUMBERCHICKEN OR HIS BUTT-VICEROY? AND YOU CAN SEE THINGS NO ONE ELSE CAN? RIGHT. BUT I DON'T KNOW WHO ELSE IS LOCKED OUT.



CALVIN: WHY THE EYEPATCH, THEN? SHOULDN'T SPIRITUAL VISION OR WHATEVER BE SUPER USEFUL? SARANNA: IT'S WAY TOO DISORIENTING TO USE ALL THE TIME. THE PATCH BLUNTS IT ENOUGH THAT I CAN MANAGE WHEN I DON'T WANT TO USE IT. FINALLY, SOME RELIEF!



CALVIN: WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE UNDER YOUR BLUNTED SPIRITUAL VISION? SARANNA: I CAN COUNT ALL YOUR BONES, AMONG OTHER THINGS.



SARANNA-VISION.

CALVIN: WHAT HAPPENED NEXT, AND HOW'D YOU GET HERE? SARANNA: THE CHICKEN GOD RANTED ABOUT MY NEARLY FREEZING THE BUTT-JESUS OUT OF HIS BUTT-VICEROY. THAT'S HOW I LEARNED WHAT THE ABOMINATION WAS. CALVIN: YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE OTHER BUTT-PEOPLE HE LEADS, THEN? SARANNA: I HADN'T BY THEN, NO. BUT MY COUSIN QUICKLY FOUND OUT WHAT I'D DONE, AND THE EYEPATCH WASN'T ENOUGH TO MAKE ME PASS AS NORMAL. SHE WAS **UNHAPPY**.

SARANNA: WHEN MY COUSIN MAKES UP HER MIND, YOU DON'T CONFUSE HER WITH THE FACTS. CALVIN: UH-OH. SARANNA: IT WAS, OF COURSE, MY **EVIL NATURE**.



CALVIN: BECAUSE YOU WERE A REBEL BY THE STANDARDS OF THE LUMBERCHICKEN, AND YOU DIDN'T LIKE BEING EITHER A SERVANT OR A PRISONER ALL THE TIME? SARANNA: RIGHT. I WAS BAD BY NATURE, AND I'D ONLY BE GOOD BY NATURE IF I'D JUST ACCEPTED MY LOT IN LIFE AND NEVER RESISTED. CALVIN: HOW IS YOUR POWER EVIL, IF YOU DON'T USE IT FOR EVIL? SARANNA: THAT'S THE QUESTION THAT SET HER OFF THE MOST. IT WASN'T FROM THE **RIGHT SOURCE**.

ARGH! THEN WHAT? SHE BROUGHT YOU TO THIS DUNGEON PERSONALLY? NO, SHE CALLED THE CHICKEN GOD'S ARMY TO TAKE ME!



SARANNA: THEY COULDN'T SPY ON ME, BUT THEY COULD ON MY COUSIN. CALVIN: SO A WHOLE BUTT-BATTALION SHOWED UP AT YOUR DOOR? SARANNA: I WOULD HAVE RUN, BUT I WAS PINNED IN PLACE UNTIL THEY GOT THERE, AND THEY WERE FLYING. CALVIN: SO THEIR TELEKINESIS WORKED ON BOTH YOU AND THEM? SARANNA: APPARENTLY. THEY BROUGHT ME HERE, AND I'M TO REMAIN UNTIL I JOIN THEM AND GIVE THEM MY POWER. **SOMEHOW**.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR COUSIN? IS SHE HURTING SOMEONE ELSE NOW? I HOPE NOT. THE BUTT-ARMY GOT HER TOO, FOR NOT KEEPING ME UNDER CONTROL PROPERLY.



THE LUMBERCHICKEN TURNED HER INTO A BUTT-SERVANT TOO, I GUESS? YES. SHE WAS ALWAYS A BUTT IN HER HEART. SHE DESERVED IT.



SARANNA: WE BOTH WERE FLOWN HERE BY TELEKINESIS. I DEFIANTLY GOT MOTION-SICK ON MY COUSIN AND SOME OF THE BUTT-ARMY ON THE WAY, AND THE ARMY'S STENCH ONLY HELPED. CALVIN: WHY IS THE LUMBERCHICKEN TRYING TO BREAK YOU THE SLOW WAY? COULDN'T HE JUST SHOVE YOUR HEAD UP THE BUTT-VICEROY'S... SARANNA: HE GOT FROSTBITE FROM LOOKING THROUGH MY EYES. LOOKING THROUGH MY WHOLE HEAD WOULD LIKELY FREEZE HIM TO DEATH. CALVIN: MAKES SENSE.

BONNNNGG! THERE'S THE LUNCHTIME GONG. JOIN ME, AND I'LL TELL YOU MY STORY WHILE WE EAT. FROZEN WAFFLES AND CANNED SOUP THREE MEALS A DAY. OH JOY.



LUNCH TODAY IS EITHER CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP OR NEW ENGLAND CLAM CHOWDER. WHICH DO YOU WANT?

THE DUNGEON GOBLINS RUNNING THE CAFETERIA WERE THEIR USUAL GRUFF SELVES.

CHOWDER... IS THAT THE RED OR THE WHITE?

THE WHITE. YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO EVER ASKS THAT.

CHOWDER, THEN. I LIKE CHOWDER.

I KNOW. YOU'RE A CHOWDERHEAD. GO GET IN LINE.

SARANNA STOOD BEHIND ME, HER BROW SUDDENLY FURROWED IN THOUGHT. WAS IT SOMETHING I SAID?

HMMM...

POW

SARANNA-VISION: COULD HE BE THE ONE? POTENTIAL FUTURE: HE CAN ENDURE HARDSHIP.

MOE, YOU WORLD-CLASS POOP HEAD!

ALTERNATE FUTURE DIMENSION IN SPACE: HE CAN ENDURE WORSE HARDSHIP.

FACE ME NOW, MOE! YOU UNCONSCIONABLE POOPFACE!

BUT CAN HE ENDURE THE ULTIMATE HARDSHIP OF TOPPLING THE CHICKEN GOD AND HIS ENTIRE BUTT-ARMY? THE KEYWORD OF THE VISION FROM MAX HAS BEEN SPOKEN. IT COULD BE.

WHY DO THEY HARDLY EVER HAVE TOMATO SOUP?

LOOKING INTO IT...

IT'S THE CLOSEST I CAN GET TO MY VERY FAVORITE SWISS CHEESE AND KETCHUP SANDWICH!

A GOBLIN LOUNGED NEARBY AS WE SAT.

I NEVER GOT YOUR NAME.

CALVIN.

NICE TO MEET YOU. IS THAT GOBLIN LISTENING?

SAME. ZLAZ THERE IS HARMLESS.

SARANNA: I'VE BEEN HERE LONG ENOUGH TO LEARN HOW SOME THINGS ARE IN HERE. THE DUNGEON GOBLINS ARE ALL IMMUNE TO MIND-READING AND HAVING THEIR WILLS BROKEN, TOO.

CALVIN: LIKE YOU? WHAT DEAL DID THEY MAKE?

SARANNA: THEY'RE NATURALLY THAT WAY BECAUSE THEY'RE FEY. AS POWERFUL AS THE CHICKEN GOD IS, HIS POWERS ARE CELESTIAL, AND ONLY WORK ON MORTALS, NOT FEY OR CELESTIALS. WELL, MOST CELESTIALS, OR DEMONS.

CALVIN: BUT THAT WON'T STOP THEM FROM TURNING US IN.

SARANNA: THEY'RE NOT JUST PRISONERS, THEY'RE SLAVES.

CALVIN: REALLY?

SARANNA: AS FEY, THEY'RE NOT HUMAN BASELINE, WHICH MAKES THEM THE LOWEST OF THE HERETICS, TURNING US IN WOULD GET THEM KILLED ALONG WITH YOU. I'D ONLY BE SPAKED BECAUSE MY POWER MAKES ME TOO VALUABLE.

CALVIN: SO WE'RE KINDA SAFE?

SARANNA: FOR NOW.

WHERE'D YOU LEARN SO MUCH? DID THE GOBLINS TELL YOU?

SOME, BUT I READ A LOT BEFORE COMING HERE.

SARANNA: NOW MAKE WITH THE STORYTELLING. I'VE TOLD YOU MY STORY.

CALVIN: I LIVED NEAR ENOUGH TO THE DUNGEON THAT IT MIGHT AS WELL HAVE BEEN IN OUR BASEMENT. MY DAD WAS A LUMBERCHICKEN FANATIC, AND I WAS LOOKING FOR OTHER OPTIONS. MY MOTHER WAS TOO SOFT-HEARTED TO SEND ME HERE, SO SHE GOT TURNED INTO A BUTT-SERVANT AND SENT HERE WITH ME. I GOT THIRTY DAYS, BUT IT TOOK ME HALF OF THAT TO FIND YOU. MY DEALINGS WITH OTHER GODS WERE... TRICKY.

SARANNA: TRICKY HOW? AND YOU HAVEN'T TOUCHED YOUR SOUP. IT'S GETTING COLD.

CALVIN: I CAN FEEL THAT PRESENCE AGAIN. WAIT FOR IT.

OWARD!

SARANNA: WHY DOES YOUR BOWL SUDDENLY HAVE COLD MANICOTTI IN IT?

CALVIN: MY FIRST ATTEMPT AT DEALING WITH ANOTHER GOD DIDN'T GO SO WELL, SO NOW HE TURNS MY FOOD INTO PASTA AT RANDOM INTERVALS. I CAN SENSE IT BEFOREHAND, AND IT ISN'T THAT BAD. I'VE DEVELOPED A TASTE FOR IT.

HOLY CATS!

IT WAS THE FLYING SPAGHETTI MONSTER. HIS AFTERLIFE WAS WEIRD.

I DON'T KNOW MUCH OTHER THAN THE NAME. GO ON.

CALVIN: HIS AFTERLIFE HAD BOTH A BEER FACTORY AND A STRIPPER VOLCANO... DARN IT, I GOT IT BACKWARDS AGAIN. I MEAN A BEER VOLCANO AND A STRIPPER FACTORY.

SARANNA: STRIPPERS? WHAT ARE THOSE?

CALVIN: SOMETHING LIKE THE GOOFY LADIES WHO WEAR THEIR UNDERWEAR ON TV COMMERCIALS. I DON'T GET IT. I DIDN'T SEE THE POINT OF AFTERLIVING THERE, EVEN IF WEARING A COLANDER ON MY HEAD DID MAKE ME LOOK SMART.

SARANNA: ROOT BEER IS GOOD, THOUGH. BUT WHY ARE ONLY WOMEN THERE? WHY NOT MEN?

CALVIN: I HAVE NO IDEA. IS IT SOME GENDER THING? AND SUSIE DIDN'T LIKE ROOT BEER, EVEN THOUGH SHE HAD THE SAME FAVORITE SANDWICH AS YOU.

HUH.

SARANNA: INTERESTING. BUT DON'T SAY THE "G" WORD AGAIN, UNLESS YOU WANT THE CHICKEN GOD TAKING AN INTEREST IN THE WORST WAY.

CALVIN: WHAT? IS IT A SWEAR WORD ALL OF A SUDDEN?

SARANNA: NO, BUT YOU SEE "BOB" THE ALIEN OVER THERE?

AWO? OV

"BOB" IS A TEMHAZG, AN ALIEN SPECIES WITH SEVEN... "G-WORDS." THE CHICKEN GOD HAS DECLARED THAT EVERYONE HERE HAVE ONLY TWO, REGARDLESS.



BACK TO YOUR STORY. WE DON'T HAVE LONG TILL LUNCH IS OVER, AND THEN IT'S DEMORALIZING HOUR. WAIT, WHAT DAY IS IT, WEDNESDAY OR THURSDAY?

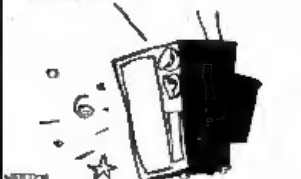


CALVIN: BUT WHY? THERE ARE EARTH SPECIES THAT HAVE MORE THAN TWO, AND "BOB" ISN'T EVEN FROM EARTH! SARANNA: I DON'T KNOW, BUT ANYONE WHO QUESTIONS IT GOES IN... THE LIGHT ROOM. CALVIN: WHAT ROOM IS THAT?



CALVIN: THURSDAY, SO FUTILE LAWYER COMMERCIAL HOUR.

THEY DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT MONEY, BECAUSE IT'S TOO VULGAR! BUT MONEY ISN'T HEMORRHOID CREAM, IT'S MONEY! CALL JOEL "THE SLAMMER" HANLEY!



A ROOM WITH A VARYING NUMBER OF LIGHTS. TO GET OUT OF IT, YOU HAVE TO KEEP SAYING THERE ARE FIVE LIGHTS, NO MATTER HOW MANY THERE ARE.



CALVIN: WHAT IF SLIME MOLD IS IN THERE? ONE SPECIES OF IT HAS SEVEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY G-WORDS! SARANNA: EEEW, GROSS! CALVIN: GROSS THINGS ARE COOL! AND HOW WELL DOES THE LUMBERCHICKEN REALLY LISTEN? SARANNA: YOU WEREN'T HERE FOR ANOTHER PRISONER FROM ANOTHER WORLD. C-H-E-N-D-A-R-R THE BARBARIAN. THAT WAS A FUN MONTH. CALVIN: SOUNDS LIKE SAYING THAT ONE WORD ENOUGH IS A WAY TO SUMMON HIM, THEN!

RIGHT. REBEL CENOTAPH CONTEMPLATION HOUR IS TOMORROW. REMIND ME TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING THEN.



CALVIN: THE NEXT GOD-LIKE THING I LOOKED INTO WAS ERIC, THE GOD-EATING MAGIC PENGUIN. SARANNA: BUT HE'S SUPPOSED TO EAT ALL GODS, NOT JUST ONE, AND YOU ALREADY DEALT WITH ONE GOD. CALVIN: I DIDN'T KNOW THAT AT THE TIME. BESIDES, HE TURNED OUT TO HAVE BEEN EATEN BY THE SEAL OF APPROVAL, WHO EATS ALL GOD-EATING THINGS AND VOMITS THE GODS UP INTACT. SARANNA: RIGHT. WIZARD SUNFLARE'S GRIMOIRE HAD NOTES ABOUT THAT.

CALVIN: WIZARDS? GRIMOIRES? IF YOU'RE LIKE SUSIE, YOU'RE READ A LOT MORE THAN I HAVE, BUT WHERE DID YOU FIND STUFF LIKE THAT? SARANNA: I'LL TELL YOU TOMORROW. TRUST ME. I GUESS I AM A LOT LIKE SUSIE THAT WAY, BUT YOU'VE ALSO LEARNED SOME STUFF I DON'T KNOW. GO ON. CALVIN: I KEPT LOOKING.



AMITABHA SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT FIRST. MEDITATING AND CHANTING HIS NAME DID HELP ME TAP INTO... SOMETHING LIKE UNIVERSAL ONENESS.



BUT SITTING STILL FOR THAT LONG WASN'T MY THING. AND HIS IDEA OF COMPASSION WAS THAT IF SOMEONE BEAT ME UP, I SHOULD BE THANKFUL THEY DIDN'T DO WORSE INSTEAD OF FIGHTING BACK. THAT'D ONLY MAKE THE MOES OF THE WORLD GET WORSE. ON THE OTHER HAND, CHANTING HIS NAME WAS EVEN EASIER ONCE I LEARNED HIS OTHER NAME, AMITAYUS. SARANNA: WHY IS THAT? CALVIN: SINGING HIS NAME WAS EASIER THAN CHANTING IT, AND THERE'S THIS SONG I HEARD ON THE RADIO, "ROCK ME, AMADEUS..." SARANNA: YOU DIDN'T, AND THOSE DON'T QUITE RHYME!

CALVIN: I WASN'T TRYING TO OFFEND HIM! I DIDN'T WANT ANOTHER ENEMY! AT LEAST HE SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND, AND I LOOKED ELSEWHERE. SARANNA: I SUPPOSE, MAYBE I SHOULD TELL THE DUNGEON GOBLIN CHORAL GROUP. CALVIN: THEIR SARCASTIC TAKE ON "THE BANKS OF THE DON" WAS HILARIOUS!



SARANNA: SO YOU DEALT WITH A LOT OF GODS AND GOD-LIKE ENTITIES. HOW MUCH MORE DID YOU HAVE TO SEARCH? CALVIN: NOT LONG, IT TURNED OUT, BUT THERE WERE A FEW MORE TWISTS.



AT LEAST YOU WERE ABLE TO SEARCH. HAVING THE CHICKEN GOD SPY ON ME CUT OFF ALL MY OPTIONS. GETTING THE SNOW DEMONS' ATTENTION WAS MY BIG BREAK.



CALVIN: I'LL HAVE TO LOOK INTO THEM. BUT I TOOK TWO MORE STEPS TO GET HERE. SARANNA: ONLY THAT MANY? GO ON. CALVIN: THE NEXT THING I LOOKED INTO WAS A FORMER ENEMY OF THE BUTT-VICEROY, BEFORE THE LUMBERCHICKEN GIT HIS TALONS INTO HIM. HIS NAME WAS SATAN. SARANNA: JUST BECAUSE HE'S YOUR ENEMY'S ENEMY, IT DOESN'T MAKE HIM YOUR FRIEND. CALVIN: I KNOW. I NEEDED TO BE SURE. IT TURNED OUT HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT EVIL WAS.

SARANNA: THAT MIGHT WORK. CALVIN: IT DIDN'T. HIS IDEA OF HELPING PEOPLE WAS MAKING THEM HAPPY BY DRIVING THEM MAD OR KILLING THEM. THEN IT TURNED OUT HE WAS NAMED AFTER HIS EVIL UNCLE, AND ALL MY DEALINGS WITH HIM TURNED OUT TO BE A CRAZY DREAM. AT LEAST I THINK SO. SARANNA: BIZARRE.



SARANNA: WHY'D YOU WORK WITH AN ENEMY OF THE BUTT-VICEROY INSTEAD OF THE CHICKEN GOD? CALVIN: ANYONE WHO'S SO GOOD AT BREAKING HERETICS THAT THEY'RE KEPT ALIVE FOR THAT IS STILL AN ENEMY. SARANNA: RIGHT. WHO'D YOU CALL ON NEXT? CALVIN: ACTUALLY, SHE CALLED ON ME.

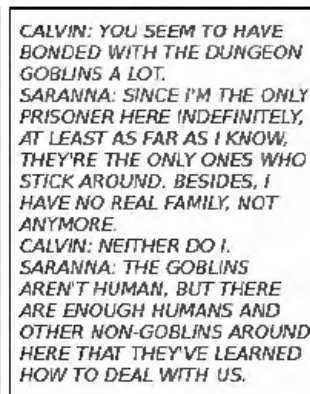
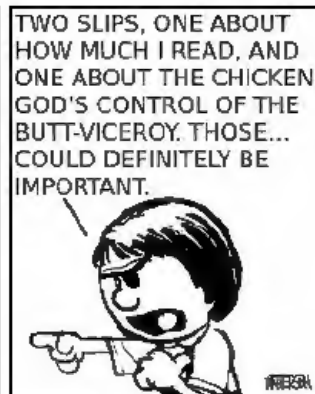
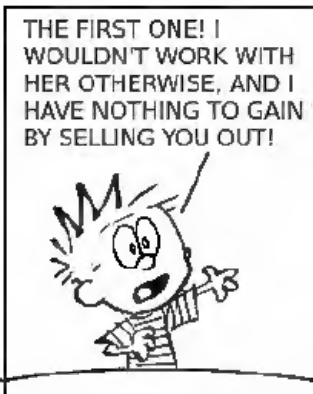
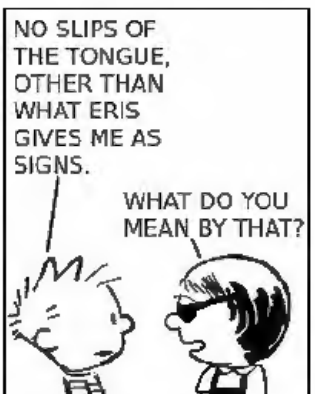
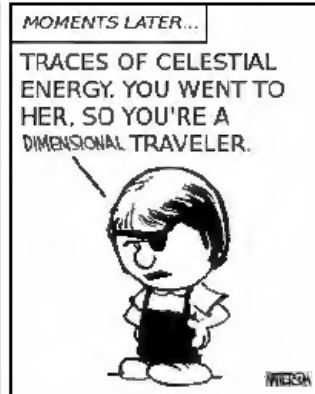
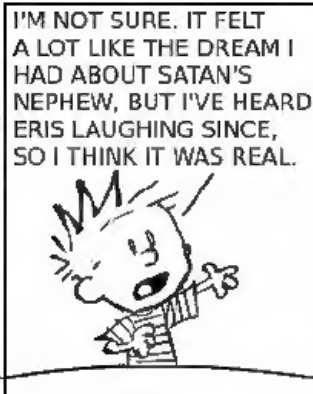
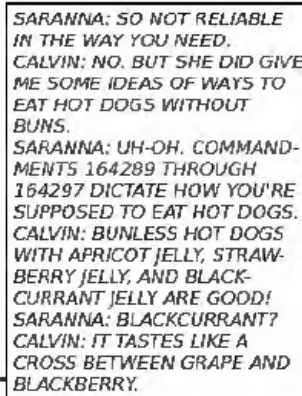
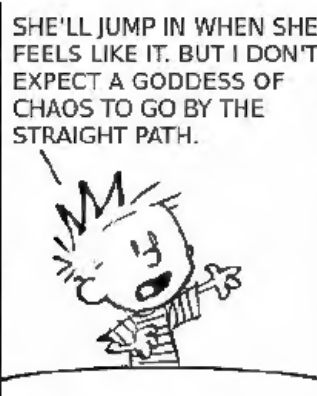


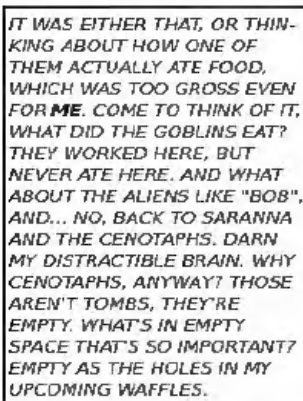
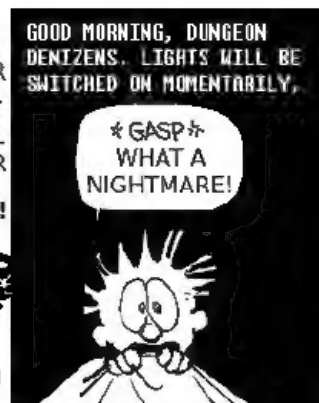
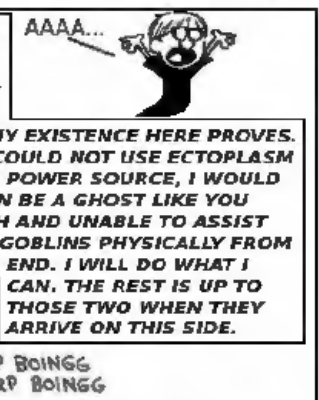
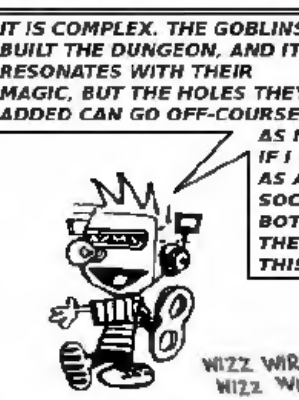
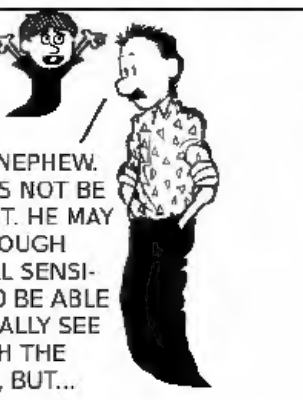
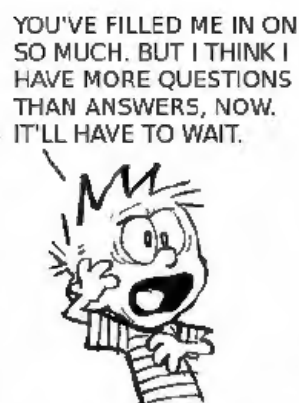
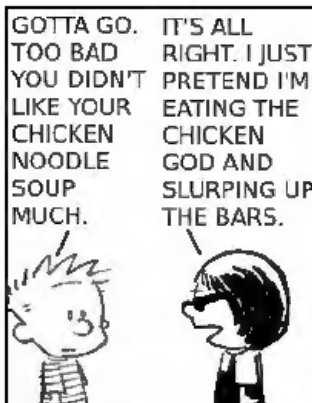
AFTER... A BAD EXPERIENCE PLAYING AN ORGANIZED SPORT AT RECESS, I'D COME UP WITH A COMPLETELY DISORGANIZED SPORT OF MY OWN. CALVINBALL. WHERE I'D JUST MAKE UP THE RULES AS I WENT. BUT I HAD NO ONE TO PLAY IT WITH.



UNTIL ERIS DISCORDIA TOOK NOTICE. CREATIVE CHAOS LIKE THAT WAS HER DOMAIN.







I PANICKED. IF ANYONE ELSE HAD HEARD THAT, I WAS UP FOR PUNISHMENT. NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE THAT THE STRAWBERRY HAD SCREAMED ON ITS OWN, AND COMMANDMENT 99304, "THOU SHALT NOT PERFORM WORDLESS STRAWBERRY VENTRILOQUISM," WAS CLEARLY SHOWN ON THE FOOD COMMANDMENTS WALL IN FRONT OF ME.



LUCKILY, IT SEEMED I WAS THE ONLY ONE. WHAT WAS UP?

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH YOUR STRAWBERRIES. TAKE YOUR FOOD AND GO. HUMANS, SOMETIMES...



IF I HAD ONLY KNOWN WHAT WAS HAPPENING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF A HOLE...

CAREFUL, BRIAN! WE DON'T NEED TO SCARE HIM!



AS A GHOST, YOU COULD SPEAK THROUGH THE STRAWBERRIES OF THE DEAD AND REASSURE HIM THAT NOTHING IS WRONG. THERE IS NO COMMANDMENT AGAINST SPOKEN STRAWBERRY VENTRILOQUISM.

YET. AND THAT WOULD MAKE THINGS WORSE.



I KEPT SENSING WEIRD THINGS THROUGHOUT THE DAY, AND WHEN I MET SARANNA AT LUNCH, SHE WAS DISTRACTED.

CRAP ON A CRUTCH, MY SPIRITUAL VISION'S BEEN GOING CRAZY TODAY!

WHERE'D YOU PICK UP THAT PHRASE?



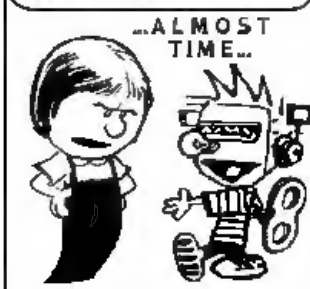
SARANNA-VISION: ANOTHER ALTERNATE FUTURE DIMENSION IN SPACE... WAIT, WHEN AND WHERE ARE WE AGAIN?



I SAID THERE ARE TWO OF ME! AND THE OTHER ME IS A ROBOT! DON'T YOU SEE IT TOO?!



NOW I DO, AND THERE ARE ALSO TWO OF ME. BUT I CAN'T HEAR THEM THAT WELL.



TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION, IT'S MY SPIRITUAL VISION AGAIN. I CAN SEE POTENTIAL FUTURES.

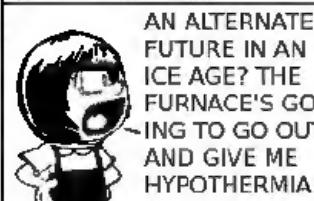
SO THAT PHRASE WAS FROM THERE? AND IT'S ALSO HOW YOU KNEW YOUR SOUP TODAY?



SARANNA: YES TO BOTH. THE EGG DROP SOUP WAS THE MOST LIKELY OPTION AT 99%. THE OPTION AT 1% WAS POTATO SOUP. CALVIN: SO IT'S NOT CERTAIN? SARANNA: ONE THING I'VE LEARNED FROM MY VISION IS THAT NOTHING'S CERTAIN. I CAN ALWAYS DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN MYSELF DO IN THE FUTURE. I'VE DONE IT BEFORE. CALVIN: HOW DID YOU GET CAPTURED AND BROUGHT HERE, SINCE YOU COULD SEE IT COMING?

SARANNA: IT WOULD HAVE ENDED BADLY IF I'D RESISTED OR RUN. I RISKED LIFTING THE EYEPATCH TO CHECK. CALVIN: TO GET MORE THAN GLIMPSES OF THE FUTURE?

SARANNA: I CAN SEE THE FUTURE EITHER WAY, BUT THE EYEPATCH BLUNTS IT ENOUGH THAT I HAVE TO CONCENTRATE A LOT MORE TO PICK IT UP, AND I SOMETIMES GET ALTERNATE FUTURES. THOSE USUALLY MEAN THAT MY VISION'S TRYING TO KEEP ME ALIVE BY HINTING AT SOMETHING. IT HAS A MIND OF ITS OWN SOMETIMES.



DOES IT TELL YOU ANYTHING ABOUT THE WEIRDNESS HAPPENING TO US BOTH RIGHT NOW?



ALL I CAN SAY IS THAT I KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN TODAY, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW EXACTLY HOW IT WOULD.



YES. HOLD OUT UNTIL CENOTAPH HOUR, AND I'LL LEAD YOU RIGHT TO ONE YOU'LL DEFINITELY WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT.



I WAS SO CURIOUS THAT I COULD BARELY FINISH MY SOUP, BUT I MADE IT. AFTER GETTING THE USUAL SPEECH FROM THE LUMBERCHICKEN ABOUT HOW THIS WAS WHAT THE DEFIANT DESERVED, THEY WEREN'T EVEN BURIED HERE, THEY ONLY GOT MARKERS AS A SHOW OF HOW LITTLE REMEMBERED THEY WERE, AND SO ON, I WAS READY TO SEE WHAT ALL THE FUSS WAS ABOUT. BESIDES, SARANNA LIKELY KNEW WHO SOME OF THE MARKERS REFERRED TO, GIVEN ALL THAT SHE'D PICKED UP IN HER LONG STAY HERE. I WASN'T IGNORANT. BUT I STILL HAD MUCH TO LEARN.

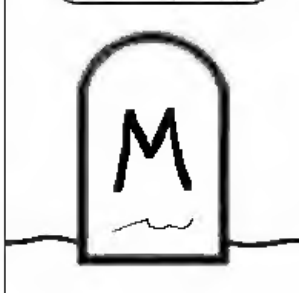
AND LEARN, I WOULD...



HOW CAN YOU TELL IT APART FROM THE OTHER "M" MARKERS?



SEE WHAT'S SCRATCHED BELOW THE "M"?

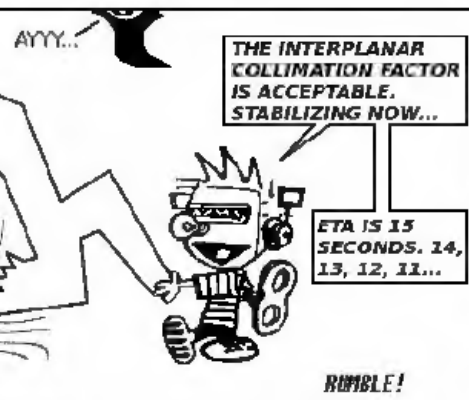
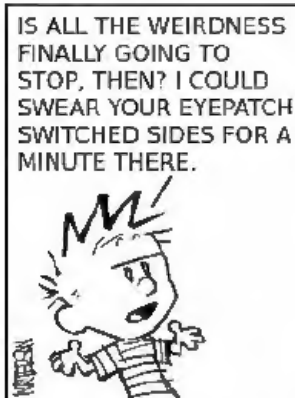
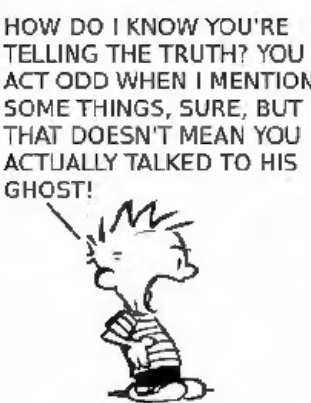


"HELLO, C." AND THE NUMBER FROM THAT GUESSING GAME I PLAYED WITH UNCLE MAX WHEN I LAST SAW HIM!



IS IT 92,376,051? BY GEORGE, IT IS!





TAKING ON THE BUTT-ARMY WOULD BE EASY WITH THEIR LEADER DEAD. THE RULES ALLOW FOR THAT CASE. I AND MY KIN COULD GO TO THEM.

AS IT STANDS, I MUST STAY IN THIS REALM AND KEEP GUARDING IT.



IT SEEMS THAT THE PROPHECY GUIDES US, SO THE CHICKEN'S FATE IS IN YOU MORTALS' HANDS, NOT MINE.



WHICH IS A SHAME.

THE HULKING CREATURE THEN PICKED UP HER CLUB AND JNSCREWED ITS END. IT WAS NOT A WEAPON, BUT ACTUALLY A MASSIVE THERMOS. AND IT SMELLED OF THE STRONGEST COFFEE EVER. SHE CHUGGED DOWN A HEALTHY AMOUNT MUTTERED UNDER HER BREATH ABOUT HOW HER PAPERWORK WAS NEVER DONE AND HOW HER SISTER ROSIE GOT TO GO TO WAR ALL THE TIME WHILE GUARDING HER HELL REALM TURNED ON HER HEELS, AND RAN FROM OUR SIGHT FASTER THAN ANYONE EXPECTED HER TO BE ABLE TO MOVE.

WHY DOES SHE DRINK COFFEE INSTEAD OF ALCOHOL, AND WHY DOES HER FAMILY HAVE NON JAPANESE NAMES?

I ASKED ONCE SHE WOULD ONLY SAY SHE WAS ATYPICAL



I HADN'T SAID MUCH SINCE WE ARRIVED, BUT I WAS STILL IN SHOCK. SARANNA HAD BEEN HERE AT LEAST ONCE BEFORE, AND OBVIOUSLY KNEW OF ONE

SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW? WHAT IS THE PROPHECY?



AND WHY ARE YOU HERE, UNCLE MAX? AND S THAT A GHOST OF CHICKEN POOP THERE?

THE PROPHECY S WHAT WILL HELP US TAKE THE LUMBERCHICKEN DOWN FOR GOOD. IT WOULD BE EASIER IF TIFFANY ATE HIM, YES, BUT BREAKING IT, OR TRYNG TO, IS HOW BRAN GOT HERE

SUSIE, BRIAN, YOU CAN COME OUT NOW!



SARANNA! IT'S BEEN SO LONG! HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?

SALUTATIONS TO BOTH OF YOU!



BRIAN THE PROPHECY-BENDING ROBOT? THAT WAS ODD

MY ORIGINAL NAME IS B-DPGWKLHPTNN-783455-4265457242423820978-2429580182546288260, BUT THE NON-ROBOTICS IN THIS DIMENSION PREFER SHORTER TERMS, SO BRIAN WILL DO.



AS FOR HOW I GOT HERE, DIED. THIS IS A GHOST REALM FOR THOSE WITH UNFINISHED BUSINESS BUT YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW I DIED. SARANNA, YOU NEED TO KNOW THIS TOO

TIME HAS STOPPED FOR YOU BOTH OUTSIDE HERE



THE ELABORATE RITUAL THAT BROUGHT YOU TWO HERE OUT OF SEASON ENSURED THAT, AND HOW MAX DIED IS ALSO TIED TO HOW I DIED.

I HATE HAVING TO PUT OFF CATCHING UP, BUT WE HAVE ALL THE TIME WE NEED



BRIAN IT IS A LONG STORY THAT INVOLVES ME AS WELL. MAX YES, BUT FOR YOU TO TRULY UNDERSTAND, ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE LUMBER CHICKEN'S SPECIAL PUNISHMENTS?

BRIAN YOU SHOULD BE, GIVEN THAT THE UPCOMING HOLIDAY OF CHICKMAS INVOLVES THEM. CALVIN YES, THE LESSON GOT POUNDED INTO ME LAST WEEK DURING SPECIAL CONVERSION HOUR. AFTER THE BUTT VICEROY MADE SOME PRISONERS' GOOD SERVANTS. MAX GOOD SERVANTS? I'D CALL THEM BUTTHEADS. GIVEN WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM CALVIN. I'LL HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT! SARANNA CALVIN GO ON!

THE PROPHECY REFERS TO THE CHAMPION'S 'ARRIVING AT A TIME OF DOUBLE WAR.' AS WE KNOW, CHICKMAS IS THE TIME WHEN THE LUMBERCHICKEN SIRES A CHICK, FINDS OUT THAT IT HAS TOO MUCH FREE WILL IN THE EGG, KILLS IT AS COMPETITION, AND FEEDS IT TO HIS TRUE FOLLOWERS. THE WAR OF CHICKMAS IS FOUGHT OVER HOW THE EGG IS COOKED AND SERVED THIS YEAR. THE SIDES ARE EITHER OMELET OR FRITTATA. ANY ACKNOWLEDGING OF NON-CHICKEN HOLIDAYS DURING THIS TIME IS CALLED THE WAR ON CHICKMAS.

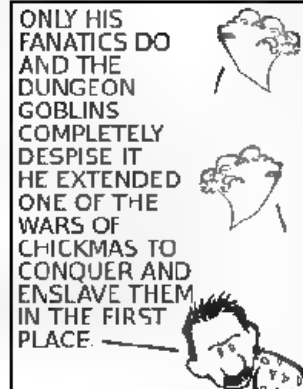


I'M NOT LOOKING FOR WARD TO THE LUMBER-CHICKEN'S STRUTTING AROUND WEARING THAT FAKE PLUMAGE AND DEMANDING EVERYONE CALL HIM "BIG HIGH WAR CHICKEN" FOR A DAY

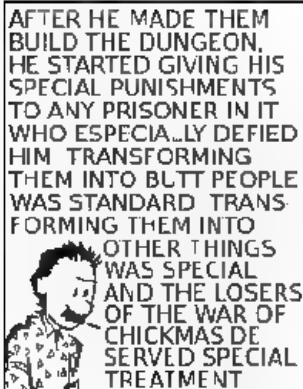


NEITHER AM

ONLY HIS FANATICS DO AND THE DUNGEON GOBLINS COMPLETELY DESPISE IT. HE EXTENDED ONE OF THE WARS OF CHICKMAS TO CONQUER AND ENSLAVE THEM IN THE FIRST PLACE.



AFTER HE MADE THEM BUILD THE DUNGEON, HE STARTED GIVING HIS SPECIAL PUNISHMENTS TO ANY PRISONER IN IT WHO ESPECIALLY DEFIED HIM. TRANSFORMING THEM INTO BUTT PEOPLE WAS STANDARD. TRANSFORMING THEM INTO OTHER THINGS WAS SPECIAL. AND THE LOSERS OF THE WAR OF CHICKMAS DESERVED SPECIAL TREATMENT.



CALVIN YES, HE TOLD ME ABOUT THAT MAX. BUT DID HE TELL YOU WHAT SOME OF HIS SPECIFIC PUNISHMENTS WERE? CALVIN NO, I THINK HE WAS RELYING MORE ON THE CONSTANT THREAT OF THEM. MAX HE'D MAKE HALF-THINGS OUT OF PEOPLE. HALF-OYSTER AND HALF-CARROT WERE ESPECIALLY FRIGHTENING. BUT HE CAME UP WITH NEW ONES AS TIME WENT ON. YOU THINK HAVING HIM EAT YOU AND TURN YOU INTO POOP IS BAD? TRY WHEN HE DIVINELY KILLS YOU AFTERWARD AND TURNS YOU INTO A POOP GHOST! CALVIN ONE THAT CAN TALK? MAX EXACTLY!



THE LAST TIME I VISITED, I COULD SENSE THAT MY BROTHER WAS PLANNING SOMETHING, SO I GOT AS FAR AWAY AS COULD

WHICH IS WHY YOU WERE GONE FOR SO LONG? I WONDERED.



MAX HE'D ALWAYS HAD A TENDENCY TO BE FANATICAL, BUT IT WAS USUALLY AT A MANAGEABLE LEVEL. THIS TIME SOMETHING, I DON'T KNOW WHAT, HAD SHIFTED IN HIM. I HAD TO FIND OUT MORE.



I REALLY WISH I'D BEEN ABLE TO TAKE YOU WITH ME

HECK, I'LL COME WITH YOU! SO LONG, MOM! BYE, DAD!

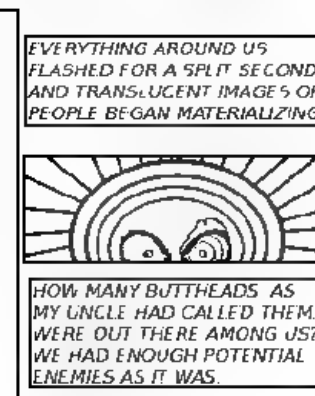
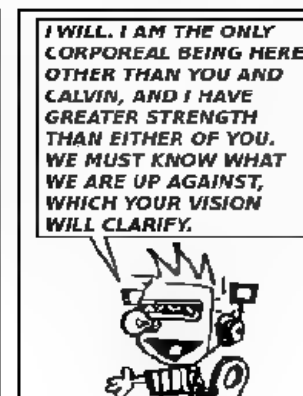
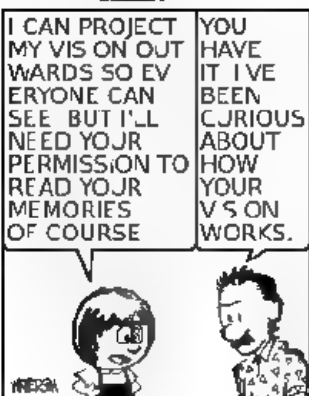
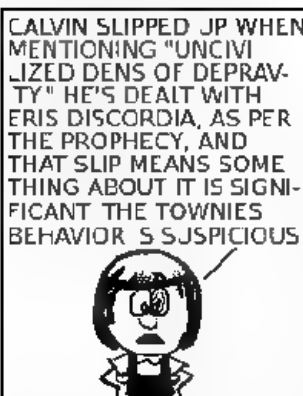
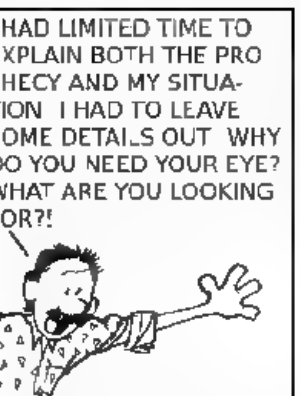
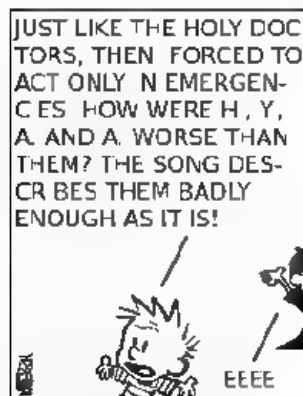
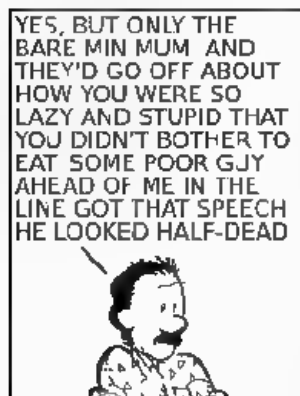
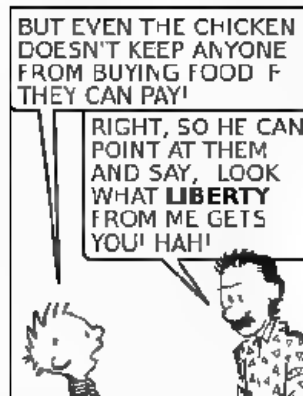
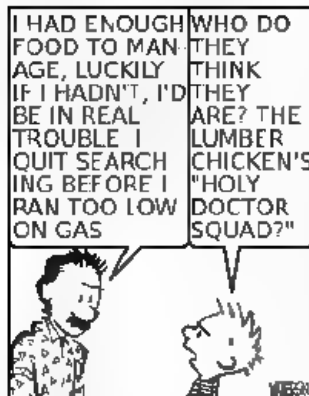
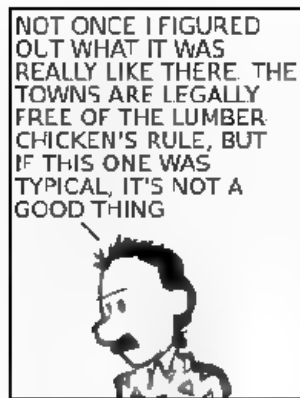
CALVIN, GET BACK HERE!



AND YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE WHERE I EVENTUALLY ENDED UP!

WITH ALL I'VE BEEN THROUGH IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS, MAYBE NOT!





SARANNA-VISION: SCANNING MEMORIES...

RESENTS OUTSIDERS AS THREATS TO HIS STATUS IN TOWN. CLEAN.



AFTER HER EXHAUSTIVE SCAN

USES HER OWN LIBERTY AS A WEAPON AGAINST OUTSIDERS. CLEAN.



HAS NO OBJECTION TO OUTSIDERS, BUT IS OVERRIDDEN BY OTHERS. CLEAN.



HAS THE TICS CAUSED BY A PERSONALITY WIPE, AND A BROWN HALO INVISIBLE TO ALL BUT THE CHICKEN GOD, HIS BUTT-PEOPLE, AND ME. DANGEROUS.



CONTINUING...

DO NOT WORRY. I HAVE YOU.



OF THE SIXTY EIGHT PEOPLE YOU DEALT WITH OVER YOUR SIX WEEKS THERE, SIXTY THREE WERE AS FREE AS YOU ARE, MAX UUUHHH ...



SO ONLY A FEW NEED TO BE AGENTS, AND THE REST FOLLOW THEM BY CHOICE? HOW DOOMED ARE WE, PROPHECY NOTWITHSTANDING?



TO BE CLEAR, THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH LIBERTY OR FREE CHOICE, BUT WHEN YOU NEED SOMETHING YOU CAN'T GET YOURSELF OR DO YOURSELF IF OTHER PEOPLE DON'T HAVE TO DO THINGS, MOST OF THEM WON'T DO THEM

THEY'RE JUST BIGGER KIDS?



UNFORTUNATELY, YES.

IT MAY NOT BE AS BAD AS YOU THINK. PER MY ANALYSIS, THE NON-AGENTS DID NOT APPEAR TO RECOGNIZE THE AGENTS AS SUCH, SO THEY ARE NOT KNOWINGLY SERVING.

NOT MUCH BETTER.



SINCE YOU SURVIVED FOR SIX WEEKS THERE, I GUESS YOU FOUND A WAY AROUND THE LACK OF AVAILABLE FOOD?

YES, SMUGGLERS. AT LEAST I DIDN'T GET SICK BEFORE I FOUND THEM

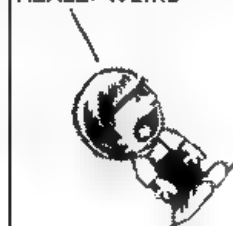


AND SPEAKING OF SICKNESS, HOW ABOUT THAT SONG? ONCE SARANNA'S HAD ENOUGH TIME TO RECOVER, OF COURSE

I'VE NEVER HEARD IT, EITHER, BUT MY SISTER COMES FIRST



UUJHHH . I LL NEED ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES. GRAVITY, OR WHATEVER PASSES FOR IT HERE, IS REALLY WEIRD



The So Called Healers

Hurmdel and Yoomnac, Ailon Accoo, Always were using their right to say no! Accoo Ailon, Yoomnac and Hurmdel, Were healers who let their patients go to, well ... H and then Y, and A. and then A! The Chicken God looked upon them one day And praised them for killing the useless vermin, (Not!) Lifting one finger and letting them termin. Ate in the name of His holy Work Ethic! Improving His servant stock wasn't malefic!

By using their Authority to deflect all Blame, Truth no longer mattered! Death to a I the ame! The Chicken so glad from their lack of al shame, Made them demigods! They were so pleased, they came. To the Bahamas! Why, what did you think?

Their goals and the Chicken's were now al in sync Put in charge of all healthcare before they could blink! No man could bypass them, or he'd be a fink! "Cleanse my planet's blood of its contamination!" He charged, and left How to their imagination

"You're lying! You're lazy! It's all in your head!" Were just a small bit of the things that they said. And what they put on paper was always believed "Two plus two is five You don't like that? Then leave!" They'd throw temper tantrums and then run away. Unprofessional? Hah! They got paid anyway! Rich patients were different. They were worthy of fe The four treated them reverently and without strife The treatment they got was all behind closed doors Confidential, to hide how the four were all horr

The So Called Healers (Part 2)

Ify ng y efficient at serving the Chicken! But this didn't last! The pot started to thicken They started believing that they were the gods And the Chicken they claimed to serve was just a fraud! They spilled more and more blood, past the point of all reason Killing people who could at least praise Him? T'was treason! So what the Chicken God gave, He then took away, "No more gods before me, or looking sideways At me! For I am the only One! My Archons on other worlds can have the r fun,

But here, I will always win!" So He sa d And the four so ca led heaters were instantly dead

WHO CAME UP WITH THAT? IT'S MOST OF THE TRUTH, YES, BUT SOME PARTS OF IT

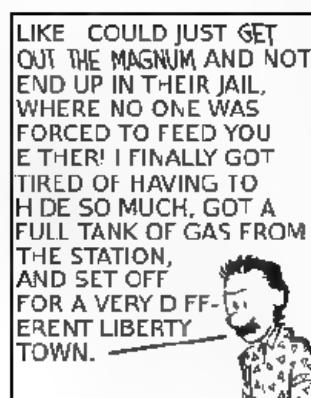
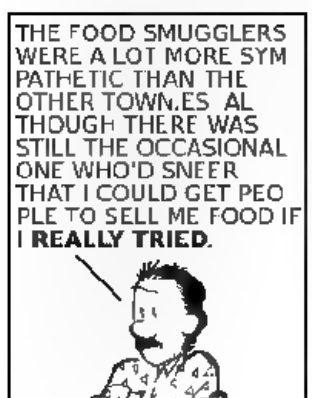
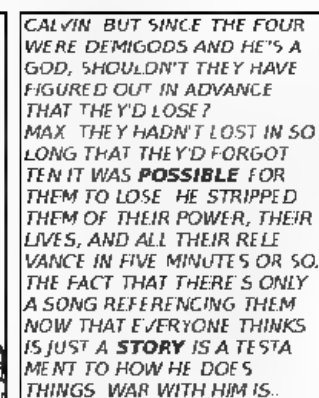
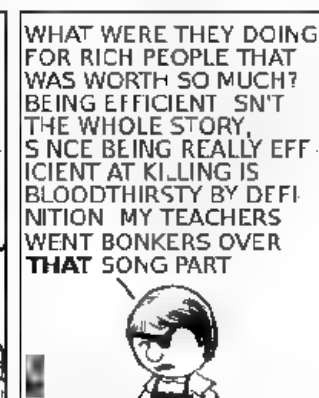
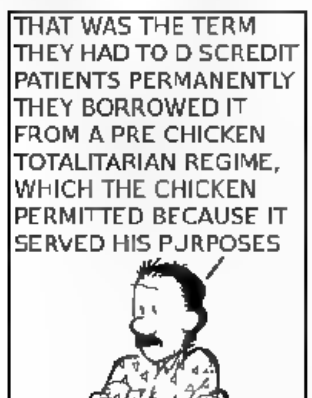
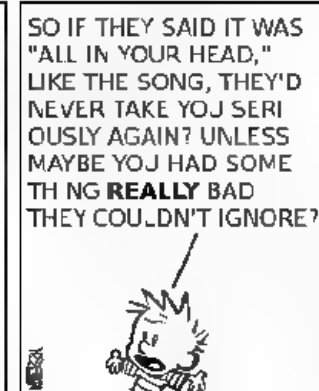
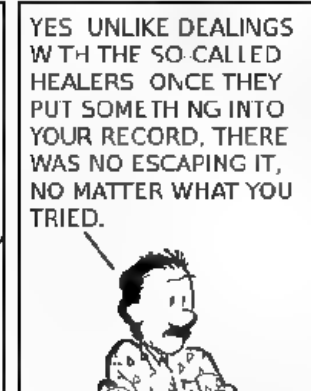
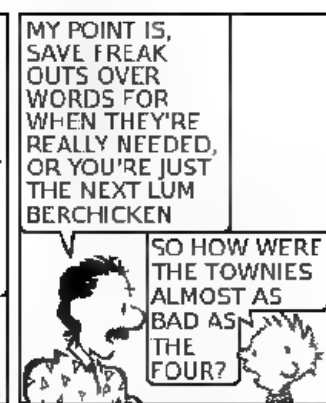
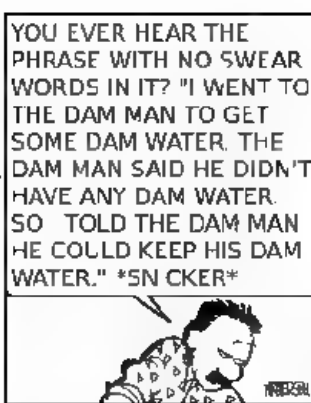
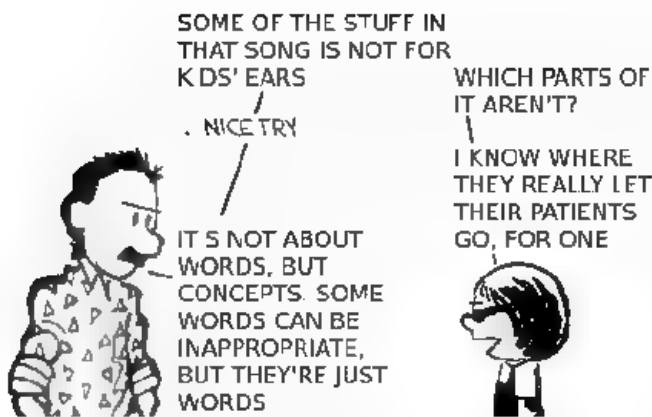
UH SOME PEOPLE ENJOY THEMSELVES WAY TOO MUCH THERE

THE TEACHERS WOULD GO BONKERS OVER THE BAHAMAS REFERENCE. WHY IS THAT?

AND THEY WANT TO GO THERE AS A REWARD FOR BEING ABLE TO KILL A LOT MORE PEOPLE? EESH!



IMAGINE WHAT I THINK NOW. YEARS LATER



IT WAS THE SECRET POLICE FORMED TO UP-HOLD WHAT THE OLD TRINITY CALLED "MORALITY" WHEN THE LUMBERCHICKEN TOOK OVER AND TURNED THEM INTO THE BUTT FATHER, THE BUTT SON, AND THE HOLY FART SPIRIT IN ONE BODY, HE TOOK IT OVER, TOO, AND MADE IT HIS ANTI-HERESY SQUAD

YOU, SARANNA, AND SUSIE LIVED THROUGH SOME OF THE TRINITY ERA, BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH YOU TWO REMEMBER OF IT

NOT MUCH.

A LOT

WHAT DID MY BROTHER SHOW YOU?

PIECES OF A HORROR MOVIE THAT SHOWED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I DIDN'T SHAPE UP.

OOOO

MAX, WHICH ONE? CALVIN "THE EXORCIST" IF I DIDN'T FOLLOW ALL THE RIGHT RULES, I'D END UP POSSESSED MAX. "SPEECHLESS" CALVIN, FIGURED SOMETHING CHANGED WHEN SUDDENLY SOME LINES IN IT SHIFTED "THE POWER OF CHRIST COMPELS YOU" BECAME "THE POWER OF CHICKEN COMPELS YOU" BUT THE LINE ABOUT THE MOTHER DOING WEIRD STUFF WITH ROOSTERS IN HELL STAYED THE SAME. I GUESS ALL THE LUMBERCHICKEN'S DEAD SON'S FROM THE WARS OF CHICKMAS WERE THERE?

MAX NEVER MIND GODS SARANNA, SO WHAT DID THE MORAL GUARDIAN SQUAD DO?

THEY DECIDED TO TAKE ALL THE SONGS ON THE ALBUM SERIOUSLY, AND ASSUMED WE WERE A TROUPE OF OCCULTIST CRIMINALS. I DON'T KNOW WHY WE GOT PUNISHED WHEN THE OTHER BANDS DIDN'T.

SOMETIMES YOU'RE JUST A TARGET BECAUSE THEY NEED ONE

AS YOU AND OUR PARENTS WOULD KNOW

THAT WAS... NOT A GOOD DECISION.

DID THEY PUT YOU IN JAIL?

YES, FOR THE WHOLE MONTH, PROCLAIMING HOW GENEROUS THEY WERE FOR NOT DOING WORSE.

WAIT! MUSICIANS JAILED IN DECEMBER OVER SACRILEGE AGAINST THE TRINITY? THE ONE THAT LED TO COMMANDMENT 72, "THOU SHALT NOT USE THE WORD 'QUASAR' AS A SWEAR WORD, FOR IT IS THE WORST OF ABOMINATIONS?"

YES, BUT IT WAS REALLY "FAUSTUS" DEAD. IT LED TO A RIOT OVER FREE SPEECH, WHERE THE RIOTERS ALL CHANTED IT, AND THE LUMBERCHICKEN BANNED THAT USE OF THE WORD OFFICIALLY WHEN HE TOOK OVER

BUT I DON'T THINK IT'S COMMANDMENT 72. 72 IS AGAINST EATING HAM BURGERS WITH MAYONNAISE

I'VE HEARD SO MANY, I SOME TIMES CAN'T KEEP THE NUMBERS STRAIGHT

IT'S NOT 73, EITHER. 73 IS AGAINST EATING HAM BURGERS WITH MAYONNAISE AND EXTRA PICKLES.

I NEVER BROKE THOSE. MY COUSIN REFUSED TO LET ME EAT HAM-BURGERS BECAUSE SHE SAID THEY RESEMBLED BREASTS.

ACCORDING TO MY DATABASE, IT IS COMMANDMENT 74. COMMANDMENT 75 IS AGAINST REPEATING THE NUMBER SIX MORE THAN TWICE IN A ROW. SINCE MY PROCESSOR IS BASE THIRTY-SIX, OR SIX PLUS SIX PLUS SIX PLUS SIX PLUS SIX PLUS SIX, I AM AN ABOMINATION AS WELL, COMPARED TO THE BASE TWO MACHINES OF THIS DIMENSION.

AREN'T YOU AN ABOMINATION IN THE CHICKEN'S EYES ANYWAY, FOR BEING A MACHINE?

NO. I COULD BE REPROGRAMMED TO SERVE HIM, AND I AM IN A FORM THAT IS NOT ALIEN BY HIS STANDARDS, SUCH AS THEY ARE.

ALTHOUGH MY BEING AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE VERSION OF YOU COULD LIKELY SET HIM OFF REGARDLESS, BUT WE ARE GETTING AHEAD OF OURSELVES

IT'S FUNNY DAD WOULD OBJECT TO THE NUMBER SIX IN GENERAL

THAT'S IN THE UNWRITTEN COMMANDMENTS THE CHICKEN SEES HIMSELF AS THE CONSERVER OF ORDER, SO YOU HAVE TO BE A "GOOD CONSERVATIVE" TO EVEN START FOLLOWING HIM

NO "WRONG IDEAS."

I'M SURE MY BROTHER MADE SURE YOU WERE NEVER EXPOSED TO ANY "WRONG IDEAS" WHENEVER HE COULD.

IS THE "ONLY TWO GENDERS" IDEA ONE OF THEM?

OOOPS! SAID THE G WORD! CAN HE HEAR THAT?

RELAX HE CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING WE SAY HERE, ESPECIALLY WITH TIME FROZEN

SO MY BROTHER'S NOT PERFECT, NO MATTER WHAT HE TRIES TO CLAIM. WHERE'D YOU LEARN ABOUT IT?

SOME BOOKS ON ANIMALS. DAD NEVER KNEW ABOUT SLIME MOLD

I MENTIONED SPERM WHALES TO HIM, BUT HE WAS WEIRD ABOUT IT IF I SAID "SPERM WHALE," HE WAS FINE, BUT IF I SAID "SPERM" ON ITS OWN, HE'D LOSE IT. THAT'S ANOTHER WORD YOU CAN ONLY SAY THE "RIGHT" WAY, I GUESS?

YES. ONLY TWO GENDERS, NOT SAYING "SPERM" EXCEPT IN VERY CERTAIN, PROPER CIRCUMSTANCES, ETC.? ALL UNWRITTEN RULES. FOR NOW

"HEY, CHICKEN! YOU'RE A SIX-GENERATED SPERM QUASAR! HA HA!"

"I'D NEVER BEEN ABLE TO FIND WORK IN THE OLD LIBERTY TOWN, AND I WAS LOW ON MONEY WHEN I LEFT. SO IT WAS A STROKE OF LUCK THAT I WAS ABLE TO FIND A NEW LIBERTY TOWN THAT GAVE ME A BETTER DEAL."



MAYBE IT WAS DESTINY

ESPECIALLY FOR REBELING IN PRE-CHICKEN TIMES. SOME TOWNS WOULD DEMAND SOME THING CURRENT, SINCE THE CHICKEN HAD TAKEN OVER BY THEN. I HAD HIGH ENOUGH STATUS THAT PEOPLE DIDN'T DARE CHEAT ME TO MY FACE.



AS OPPOSED TO THE OLD TOWN?

RIGHT. THOSE TOWNIES WOULD TELL YOU THEY'D DO THINGS, AND THEN BLOW YOU OFF WITH, "WHEN I SAID THAT, I WAS JUST TRYING TO BE NICE." OR THEY'D DO THINGS EXACTLY ONCE IN PUBLIC, TELL YOU TO "CALL ME IF YOU NEED ANYTHING," AND GET ENRAGED IF YOU ACTUALLY DID THAT, BECAUSE THEY WERE "BUSY."

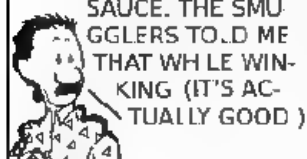


SERIOUSLY, THE ONLY GOOD THINGS ABOUT THE OLD TOWN WERE THAT THE SMUGGLERS WERE FRIENDLY AND THE BARBECUED MUTTON THEY HAD THERE WAS TO DIE FOR.. IF YOU COULD GET YOUR HANDS ON IT.

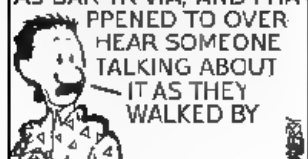


DID IT END UP GETTING BANNED?

NO. THE CHICKEN'S COMMANDMENTS SEEM TO BE BASED ON WHIMS MORE THAN ENJOYMENT. THERE WERE ONLY TWO ADDED WHILE I WAS THERE. 476268 BANNED MIXING GRUTS AND PIZZA SAUCE. THE SMUGGLERS TOLD ME THAT WHILE WINNING (IT'S ACTUALLY GOOD).



AND 476269 BANNED USING "EQUALS" SIGN NO LONGER REQUIRED. AS A EUPHEMISM FOR "UH, MATING." LIBERTY TOWNS ARE EXEMPT FROM ALL BUT THE FIRST TEN COMMANDMENTS, SO THE OTHERS ONLY COME UP AS BAR TR VIA, AND I HAPPENED TO OVERHEAR SOMEONE TALKING ABOUT IT AS THEY WALKED BY.

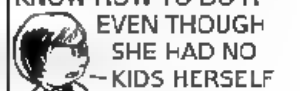


ONLY TWO NEW RULES IN SIX WEEKS? HE MUST HAVE HAD AN OFF MONTH AND A HALF.



IF YOU MEAN "SEX," MY COUSIN SAID IT SHOULD ONLY BE CALLED "MAKING YOLKS," AND IT'S ONLY FOR MAKING THE CHICKEN NEW SERVANTS.

SHE'D FLIP OUT IF SHE HEARD IT CALLED "MAKING LOVE," BECAUSE SHE SAID NO ONE SHOULD EVER LOVE ANYONE BUT THE CHICKEN GOD. I ASKED WHY. AND SHE SAID I'D UNDERSTAND ONCE I WAS OLD ENOUGH TO KNOW HOW TO DO IT. EVEN THOUGH SHE HAD NO KIDS HERSELF.

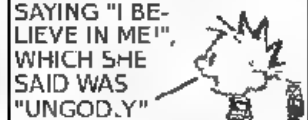


WHAT WERE OUR PARENTS THINKING, LEAVING YOU WITH HER? I HOPE YOU DON'T HATE ME FOR ABANDONING YOU!



I DID FOR AWHILE, BUT I FINALLY REALIZED YOU COULDN'T HAVE GONE AGAINST THEM AND BLAMING THE WRONG TARGET. WHAT SHE'D DO.

YIKES. THE CLOSEST I GOT TO THAT WAS MOM'S BIG LECTURE ON COMIC BOOKS. THE ONE WITH AMAZON GIRL AND THE HYPER-PHASE DISTORTION BLASTER WAS MUCH TOO VIOLENT, AND THE ONE WITH RAINBOW RAIDER VERSUS BATMAN HAD THE VILLAIN WIN SAYING "I BELIEVE IN ME!", WHICH SHE SAID WAS "UNGODLY."



AND THEN DAD JUMPED IN ABOUT HOW RAINBOW RAIDER'S BEING A WINNER MIGHT ENCOURAGE ME TO MATE WITH THE WRONG SORT OF PEOPLE. HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HE MEANT, OR WHAT IT HAD TO DO WITH THAT RAINBOWS ARE JUST COOL!



HE SAID I NEEDED TO "LISTEN TO FACTS."



"LISTEN TO PHAX?" SO HE'S STARTED REFERRING TO HIMSELF IN THE THIRD PERSON AGAIN?

WAIT, WHAT? ARPHAXAD? HUH?

"ARPHAXAD" IS MY BROTHER'S NAME. HE NEVER TOLD YOU THAT? I'M SURPRISED, GIVEN HIS HUGE EGO DOES HE THINK IT'S SACRED, OR SOMETHING?



HE DID SAY THAT I SHOULD NEVER REFER TO THROWING UP AS "ARFING," OR CALL YOU MAXIMILIAN, SINCE IT SOUNDS LIKE "MAX, A MILLION."



HE IS STILL HUNG UP ON NEVER HEARING MAX'S CHILDHOOD NICKNAME, WHILE HE WEAPONIZES HIS OWN. A PURBLIND HUMAN.



MY BROTHER'S ALWAYS BEEN ARROGANT AND WILLING TO LATCH ONTO WHOEVER HE THINKS WILL PUT HIM IN A POSITION OF POWER.



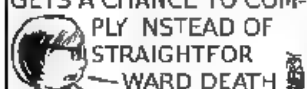
YES, I KNOW

DAD'S COLLEGE YEARBOOK SHOWED ME THAT



IS THIS YOU WITH THE "I THOUGHT I WAS WRONG ONCE, BUT I WAS MISTAKEN" T-SHIRT? GIVE ME THAT!

CALVIN'S BEING HIS ONLY CHILD IS WHY HE THREW CALVIN IN THE DUNGEON. AS A HIGH RANKING FOLLOWER OF THE CHICKEN, HIS OFFSPRING REFLECT ON HIM. AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT I'VE PICKED UP FROM OTHER PRISONERS DURING MY STAY. CALVIN GETS A CHANCE TO COMPLY INSTEAD OF STRAIGHTFORWARD DEATH.



MOM AND DAD TRIED TO HAVE ANOTHER BABY, BUT MOM SAID SOMETHING WENT WRONG AND THEY COULDN'T HAVE ANY MORE AFTER ME. MAYBE IT WOULD HAVE CHANGED THINGS IF THEY COULD?



NOT FOR THE BETTER. THEY'D GET A DAD JR., AND.

SARANNA VISION: 97% LIKELY ALTERNATE TIMELINE.



I PRAISE THE LUMBERCHICKEN, DAD!



NEW BABY BROTHER "MELVILLE"

AND THEN, WITH ME DEAD AND "MELVILLE" A GOOD STOOGIE, THE LUMBERCHICKEN WOULD RULE UNOPPOSED?

NOT FOR THAT LONG "MELVILLE" WOULD HAVE HIS FATHER'S EGO, AND THEY'D SOON FIGHT OVER WHO GOT TO BE IN CHARGE TO THE DEATH



AND THE CHICKEN ISN'T UNOPPOSED, EVEN WITHOUT YOU TWO IN THE LIVING WORLD. LIBERTY TOWNS ALL HAVE FREEDOM OF RELIGION, EXCEPT FOR "POLITICALLY DANGEROUS" RELIGIONS. **THEY'RE BANNED.**

WHAT ARE THOSE?



ANY RELIGION THAT'S PRIMARILY FOCUSED ON SEIZING POLITICAL POWER IN THE LIVING WORLD. THE BEST KNOWN IS, OF COURSE, CHICKENISM, BUT SMALL POCKETS OF OTHER ONES ARE ALL OVER THE PLACE

LIKE WHAT?



MAX, SOME FOLLOWERS OF THE OLD SO-CALLED MONOTHEISM SWEAR THAT THE LUMBERCHICKEN DIDN'T ACTUALLY TURN THEIR GODS INTO POOP AND STILL WORSHIP THEM, EVEN AFTER MAKING A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY SEPTIC TANK DURING DECIDE DAY AND SEEING THE POOP FOR THEMSELVES. CALVIN DO SOME OF THEM START WORSHIPPING THE POOP INSTEAD?

MAX, SOME PEOPLE WORSHIP ANYTHING. I RAN INTO ONE GUY WHO WORSHIPPED THE DYSLEXIC VAMPIRE GHOST "NOSRETTAW" AS THE ORIGINAL CREATOR OF THE AFTERLIFE PLANES, AND WOULD SCRAWL HIS NAME ALL OVER

THERE ARE GHOST VAMPIRES? I THOUGHT THEY WERE UNDEAD ALREADY AND COULDN'T BE GHOSTS!

I'VE LEARNED A LOT ABOUT GHOSTS SINCE I BECAME ONE



GHOSTHOOD IS JUST A STATE OF BEING DEAD AND NON-PHYSICAL. THE PHYSICAL DEAD CAN BECOME NON-PHYSICAL WITH THE RIGHT METHODS. AND WHAT CAN BE DEAD IS FLEXIBLE, TOO.

HOW FLEXIBLE?



FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO COUNT AS ANIMISM, WHICH THE CHICKEN CALLS HERESY. REMEMBER THE BOOK-BURNING ERA THAT INTENSIFIED WHEN THE CHICKEN TOOK OVER?

WHO WOULDN'T? ESPECIALLY SINCE I READ A LOT MORE AFTER I STARTED FIGHTING

H.M.

YOU HAVE CHANGED!



THE BURNED BOOKS TURNED INTO GHOSTS, AND THEY'RE AVAILABLE IN CERTAIN LIBRARIES ON THIS SIDE, IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK

AND CAN STAY ON TIFFANY'S GOOD SIDE



I KNOW ABOUT ANIMISM. I HAD SOME BAD EXPERIENCES TRYING TO RIDE A BIKE THAT DIDN'T WANT TO BE RIDDEN. DOES IT APPLY TO EVERYTHING?



YES. SOME THINGS I KNOW WHAT THEY'RE GETTING INTO. YOU DON'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE TO EVERYTHING. JUST BE MORE CAREFUL.



INFORMATION IS NOT LOST. MY PEOPLE ARE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE MULTIVERSE SINCE THE CHICKEN TOOK OVER MY HOME REALITY BY CONSUMING ITS SPIRITUAL ENERGY FOR HIS ASCENSION.



BRIAN, I SOMETIMES GOT A TRANSMISSION FROM ONE OF THEM. OR FOUND GRAFFITI WRITTEN IN MY LANGUAGE CARVED INTO WRECKAGE BEFORE I CAME HERE.

4555993709434879170-1485587124276568358-2843020246246048968? PREPOSTEROUS. I NEITHER LOOK NOR SMELL LIKE A



SARANNA, SO THE CHICKEN GOD HAS DONE EVEN WORSE THAN I THOUGHT. CALVIN, ALTHOUGH FINDING TRACES OF THEM MEANS THAT THEY'RE NOT GONE, BUT HE'LL HAVE TO APOLOGIZE TO AN ENTIRE REALITY'S WORTH OF STUFF, AND I'LL ONLY HAVE TO APOLOGIZE TO A SHIRT FOR WHAT I DID TO IT ONE TIME.



KACHOO!

I GUESS THE GHOST LIBRARIES HOLD SECRETS THAT COULD TAKE THE LUMBERCHICKEN DOWN, SINCE HE WOULDN'T BURN BOOKS UNLESS THEY THREATENED HIM SOMEHOW?

DEFINITELY



BUT HE WOULD SOME TIMES BURN BOOKS BECAUSE HE COULD, AND THEN CLAIM THAT HE WAS THE REAL DISCOVERER OF WHAT WAS IN THEM, IN ORDER TO REWRITE HIS STORY IN HIS FAVOR.

I'VE SEEN THAT



HOW COULD YOU HAVE SEEN THAT? UNLESS YOU WENT TO THE GHOST LIBRARY WHEN MAX TALKED TO YOU LAST TIME?

NO SUCH LUCK. BUT THE CHICKEN DOESN'T PAY AS MUCH ATTENTION AS HE SHOULD.



HE MOSTLY WATCHES AND LISTENS DURING MEALTIMES IN THE DUNGEON. OTHER TIMES, LIKE DEMORALIZING HOURS, HE ONLY DOES IF HE FEELS LIKE IT, BECAUSE HE THINKS THAT WE'RE SECURE AND HE CAN LET HIS GUARD DOWN. LUCKY FOR US AND THE GOBLINS, THE DUNGEON LIBRARY HAS A FEW OLD BOOKS HE MISSED...



I TAKE IT THE GOBLINS STILL HAVE YOU UNDER THEIR PROTECTION?

YES. THEY'VE INDUCTED ME INTO THEIR SOCIETY BY NOW. I'M AN HONORARY GREMLIN.



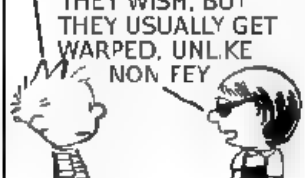
THERE ARE DUNGEON GREMLINS AS WELL AS GOBLINS?

"GREMLIN" IS A TITLE FOR A GOBLIN WITH MORE APPETITE FOR TECHNOLOGY THAN MAGIC. I WASN'T BORN A GOBLIN, SO THEIR NATURAL MAGIC IS BEYOND ME.

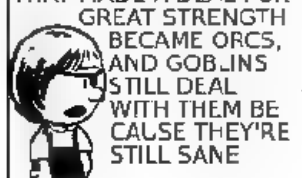


YOUR SPIRITUAL VISION DOESN'T QUALIFY YOU, AS POWERFUL AS IT IS?

NO, BUT THAT KIND OF MAGIC IS BEYOND THEM. THEY CAN MAKE DEALS WITH OTHER POWERS IF THEY WISH, BUT THEY USUALLY GET WARPED. UNLIKE NON-FEY.



THOSE WHO MAKE SUCH DEALS ARE WARLOCKS, AND THEY MOSTLY END UP TWISTED INTO ELDritch HORRORS. BUT SOME END UP TWISTED INTO DIFFERENT SPECIES INSTEAD. ONE CLAN THAT MADE A DEAL FOR GREAT STRENGTH BECAME ORCS, AND GOBLINS STILL DEAL WITH THEM BECAUSE THEY'RE STILL SANE.



THE ORCS ARE DIFFERENT ENOUGH FROM THE GOBLINS THAT THE CHICKEN GOD'S MAGICAL YOKE ON THE GOBLINS HAS NO HOLD ON THEM. SO MOST OF THE ORCS GOT AWAY FROM HIM, EXCEPT FOR THE OCCASIONAL STRAGGLER CAUGHT BY HIS NON HUMAN RAIDER SQUADS.



THE RAIDERS ARE NON HUMAN, OR THEY RAID FOR NON HUMANS?

BOTH, SOMETIMES. SOME SELL THEIR OWN PEOPLE OUT TO SAVE THEMSELVES, UNTIL HE TURNS ON THEM



WHY IS A CHICKEN SO OBSESSED WITH HUMANITY? SHOULDN'T HIS BUTT SERVANTS BE BIRD-LIKE CLOACA-SERVANTS?

I HAVE NO IDEA MY BEST GUESS IS THAT TOO MUCH POWER DRIVES ANYONE MAD



SO THAT'S HOW "BOB" THE ALIEN AND OTHERS LIKE THEM GOT IN THE DUNGEON BUT GETTING TO OTHER DIMENSIONS AND STUFF IS HARD, GIVEN WHAT WE HAD TO DO TO GET HERE.

SOME PLACES HAVE NATURAL RIFTS BETWEEN THEM, LIKE CERTAIN LIBERTY TOWNS.



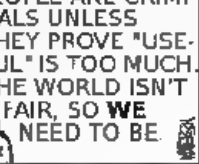
SOUNDS COOL TO ME. BUT DAD WOULD GO OFF SOME TIMES ABOUT HOW PEOPLE FROM OTHER REALITIES WERE RUINING THIS ONE BY COMING HERE ILLEGALLY

EACH LIBERTY TOWN SET UP ITS OWN LEGAL PROCEEDINGS FOR THEM

SO THEY EACH MADE UP THEIR OWN WAYS?



PRETTY MUCH WHAT WAS LEGAL DEPENDED ENTIRELY ON WHO WAS ENFORCING THINGS, WHICH VARIED A LOT KEEPING EXTRADIMENSIONAL CRIMINALS OUT IS ONE THING, BUT MAKING LAWS SAYING ALL SUCH PEOPLE ARE CRIMINALS UNLESS THEY PROVE "USEFUL" IS TOO MUCH. THE WORLD ISN'T FAIR, SO WE NEED TO BE



EVEN WITH GODS WHO COULD INTERVENE? I'VE WORKED WITH SEVERAL WHO COULD, BESIDES ERIS.

WHEN AND HOW THEY INTERVENE VARIES A LOT TOO NOT COUNTING HOW THEY FIGHT AND TEAR DOWN EACH OTHERS' WORK SOME TIMES



A LOT OF LEGAL STUFF SOUNDS LIKE IT'S EITHER MEAN OR IT'S ARBITRARY AS FOR THE GODS, I GUESS I'VE BEEN LUCKY.

JUST DON'T FALL IN THE TRAP OF "THEY'RE UNWORTHY OF MY TIME UNLESS THEY DO WHAT I WANT" THAT'S BAD ENOUGH WHEN APPLIED TO PEOPLE



THE LUMBERCHICKEN'S FROM ANOTHER REALITY, AND THERE'S NO MENTION OF HIS SIGNING THE LEGAL PAPERWORK TO BE HERE THAT I CAN FIND, NOT IN THE ROOSTER TESTAMENT, ANY OF THE CHICK TRACTS, OR THE POULTRY VUH

NOPE NOT HERE IN THIS REALITY, MUCH LESS IN AMERICA



THE SAME APPLIES TO THE OLD TRINITY, ODDLY ENOUGH BUT DON'T TELL ANYONE WHO THINKS LIKE MY BROTHER THAT

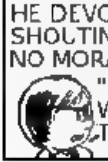
I POINTED IT OUT ONCE WHILE HE WAS RANTING ABOUT DIMENSIONAL INVADERS

UH OH



HE GOT AS ANGRY AS I'VE EVER SEEN HIM, ONLY THE SECOND TIME HE'S DONE THAT HIS VOICE WENT UP AN OCTAVE, HE SAID "IT'S NOT THE SAME THING", AND WENT OFF ON SOME EXPLANATION THAT MADE NO SENSE UNTIL HE DEVOLVED INTO SHOUTING THAT I HAD NO MORALS

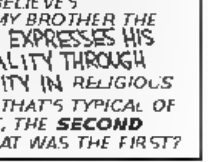
"MELVILLE" WOULD TOO



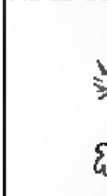
CALVIN AND THEN HE WRAPPED UP BY SAYING THAT HE WAS ENTIRELY INDEPENDENT, HE THOUGHT FOR HIMSELF AND HE WORSHIPPED THE OLD TRINITY BECAUSE IT WAS WHAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF AMERICANS BELIEVED IN.

SARANNA UNTIL THE CHICKEN TOOK OVER AND HE CHANGED SIDES, RIGHT? AND HE HAS NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT ANYONE BELIEVES

MAX: SO MY BROTHER THE MAVERICK EXPRESSES HIS INDIVIDUALITY THROUGH CONFORMITY IN RELIGIOUS BELIEFS? THAT'S TYPICAL OF HIM WAIT, THE SECOND TIME? WHAT WAS THE FIRST?



THERE WAS A TV COMMERCIAL WHICH SHOWED JESUS AS A LUMBERJACK, GOING OUT AT SUNRISE TO CUT DOWN DEAD WOOD "KEEP FAITH, OR HE'LL CUT YOU DOWN."

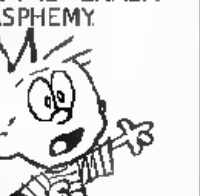


I REMEMBER THAT IT'S SUPREMACY THAT A MEMBER OF THE OLD TRINITY WOULD SHOW UP AS A LUMBERJACK

SOME KIDS AT SCHOOL WERE TALKING ABOUT IT AND ONE SAID, "BY JESUS' MORN'NG WOOD!"



THOUGHT IT WAS ANOTHER WAY TO REFER TO A LUMBERJACK'S LOAD, UNTIL I MENTIONED IT AROUND DAD HE WRAPPED UP THAT EXPLOSION WITH A LECTURE ON THE PENALTY FOR BLASPHEMY

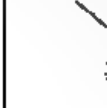


AND SOMETHING ABOUT COMMANDMENT 11, AND HOW HE SWORE JESUS DIDN'T HAVE ANY ANATOMY WORTH BEING ASHAMED OF, WHATEVER THAT MEANT.

GODS

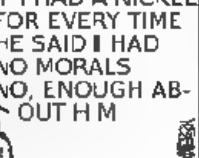


I STILL DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT, BUT SINCE THE CHICKEN FUSED JESUS WITH THE REST OF THE OLD TRINITY AND TURNED THEM INTO THE BUTT VICEROY, I GUESS ONLY THE CHICKEN KNOWS WHERE JESUS' MORN'NG WOOD IS NOW?



UH, RIGHT HE HAS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT ANATOMY NOW. AND MY BROTHER STILL REACTS TO BEING CONTRADICTED THE WAY HE ALWAYS HAS

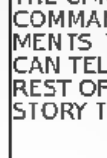
IF I HAD A NICKEL FOR EVERY TIME HE SAID I HAD NO MORALS NO, ENOUGH ABOUT HIM



IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE GETTING TO THE GOOD PART, AND I HATE TO INTERRUPT, BUT IS THERE ANY WAY TO GET SOME FOOD HERE BEFORE YOU CONTINUE? IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE CALVIN AND I ATE, AND I'M AT LEAST HUNGRY FOR SOMETHING THAT'S NOT WAFFLES OR SOUP



THIS STORY HAS TAKEN A WHILE, HASN'T IT? BUT THE CELESTIAL BUREAU CRACY DID LET YOU IN, AND, AS MORTALS, YOU CAN EAT THE SAME FOOD AS ONE SOME OF THEIR RESTAURANTS TAKE PRIDE IN BREAKING THE CHICKEN'S FOOD COMMANDMENTS TOO WE CAN TELL THE REST OF THE STORY THERE



WE GOT A FEW FOOD VOUCHERS FROM TIFF ANY BEFORE WE PULLED YOU HERE, JUST IN CASE AND THE NEAREST RESTAURANTS ARE WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE, SO WE WON'T HAVE TO GO THERE BY MAGIC CARPET



YEP HERE THEY ARE!

FOLLOW ME IT'S ALL TOO EASY TO GET LOST WHEN YOU'RE NOT NATIVE TO THIS PLANE OF EXISTENCE



BRIAN'S NOT A GHOST WHAT DOES HE EAT? AND DO ROBOTS EVEN HAVE GHOSTS?

I HAVE ADAPTED TO THIS PLANE. I CAN OBTAIN ALL ENERGY I NEED BY ABSORBING THE AMBIENT ECTOPLASM PRODUCED BY GHOSTS.



AND YES, ROBOTS CAN HAVE GHOSTS. MANY OF MY PEOPLE WERE SCATTERED INTO HOSTILE AREAS OF THE MULTIVERSE. I WAS LUCKY TO END UP HERE INSTEAD, WHERE I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

COOL RIDING A MAGIC CARPET WOULD HAVE BEEN COOL, TOO



YOU'RE THINKING FLYING MAGIC CARPETS THE ONES I'M TALKING ABOUT ARE WISHING CARPETS THAT TELEPORT YOU INSTANTLY THEY'RE MORE COMMON IN BIGGER REGIONS LIKE THE HEAVENS AND HELL'S EVERYONE HERE KNOWS ABOUT THEM AFTER THE STORMFIELD INCIDENT AWHILE BACK, WHEN HE USED ONE OF THEM TO GET HOME.



MOVEMENT IS CRAZY HERE I SWEAR THAT BACKWARDS "NOSRETTAW" GRAFFITI DISAPPEARED JUST BEFORE WE STARTED WALKING, BUT NOW IT'S BACK!



WHAT'S THAT?

A CAPTAIN STORMFIELD WENT OFF COURSE TRYING TO GET TO HIS RIGHTFUL HEAVEN HE ENDED UP AT A HEAVEN FOR SKY BLUE, ONE LEGGED, SEVEN HEADED PEOPLE WHO THOUGHT EARTH WAS CALLED "THE WART"



AND, IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING, NOT ALL HELLS RUN ON ETERNAL PUNISHMENT ONLY THE UNJUST ONES RUN BY GODS LIKE THE LUMBER CHICKEN AND THE BUTT V CERORY (THOSE TWO DESERVE EACH OTHER) THE JUST ONES HAVE FINITE PUNISHMENTS FOR FINITE CRIMES, AND MERCY WHEN IT APPLIES IT WAS A RELIEF TO FIND THAT OUT

BUT IF YOU WANT TO EAT ANYTIME SOON, WE REALLY SHOULD STOP TALKING AND START WALKING

YES, LET'S GO!



YOU GHOSTS FLOATING UP AND DOWN I CAN DEAL WITH, EVEN IF IT LOOKS LIKE YOU GROW AND SHRINK IN PLACE SOMETIMES. WOULD IT BE EASIER IF I WERE A GHOST, TOO?



MAYBE I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE, AND I'M NOT ALL THAT USED TO IT MAYBE IF WE HAD MINISTABILIZER JETS LIKE THE ONES BRIAN SPROUTED ON LIFTOFF



I SEE THE SIGNS. THE NEAREST ONE IS FOR A PIZZERIA CLAIMING TO BREAK ALL COMMANDMENTS IN THE 40700S. I FIND IT INTERESTING THAT THERE ARE EXACTLY ONE HUNDRED COMMANDMENTS THAT DEAL WITH PIZZA.

WE FINALLY REACHED A MASSIVE FLOATING CHUNK OF GROUND WITH A ROW OF BUILDINGS ON IT. SJSIE HANDED SARANNA AND ME OUR VOUCHERS, AND I LOOKED AT MINE CLOSELY

WHAT'S THIS? "BREAKING COMMANDMENT 56943 WILL RESULT IN THE CLIENT'S BEING BANNED"



WE'VE NEVER HEARD OF THAT ONE!

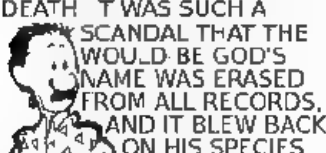
IT'S OBSCURE "THOU SHALT NOT TRAFFIC IN LAPIS LAZULI FROM DEMONIC MUSQUASH PEOPLE"

WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?



MAX SHORT VERSION CELESTIALS AND DEMONS HAVE BEEN AT WAR FOR AGES. CELESTIALS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ASCEND TO GODHOOD MORE, SO THEY HAVE BETTER PR AND TEND TO PAINT DEMONS AS EVIL BUT IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE SARANNA. THE CHICKEN IS AN ASCENDED CELESTIAL AND HE'S NOT GOOD MAX RIGHT THERE ARE OTHER CELESTIALS AND DEMONS, IN A VARIETY OF FORMS AND SOME ARE IN MORE HUMANIZED FORMS. FROM CELESTIAL IBEX-PEOPLE TO DEMONIC MUSQUASH PEOPLE CALVIN GOAT-PEOPLE AND ROBOT PEOPLE? WOW, I WONDER HOW MANY OTHERS THERE ARE!

LOTS SO ONE LEADER OF THE MUSQUASH PEOPLE TRIED BJJING HIS WAY TO GODHOOD WITH LAPIS LAZULI HE'D GOTTEN FROM A MINE HE OWNED BUT IT WAS ALL GLAMOURED BLUE COPROLITES FROM DEMONIC DEER PEOPLE HE'D ENSLAVED AND WORKED TO DEATH IT WAS SUCH A SCANDAL THAT THE WOULD-BE GOD'S NAME WAS ERASED FROM ALL RECORDS, AND IT BLEW BACK ON HIS SPECIES



SO TRYING TO PAY FOR FOOD BY PASSING FOSSILIZED POOP OFF AS GEM STONES WILL GET YOU BANNED FROM ONLINE RESTAURANTS? THAT IS OBSCURE BUT ONLY FRESH DEER POOP IS BLUE, FROM FROM WHEN THEY EAT A LOT OF BERRIES!



OF COURSE YOU'D KNOW ABOUT GROSS THINGS LIKE POOP FOSSILS AND COLORS!

YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED THAT MUCH!



I WAS CURIOUS, TOO THE FOSSILS ABSORBED BLUE AGATE, WHICH MADE THEM BLUE AGAIN, SO THE GLAMOUR DIDN'T HAVE TO DO AS MUCH WORK. THE MUSQUASH LEADER MADE BLUE HIS OFFICIAL COLOR, AND HIS FOLLOWERS ALL HAD TO WEAR BLUE GINGHAM OUTFITS AND ARMY BOOTS, AND WERE BARRED FROM DANCING THE JITTERBUG

OH, THOSE MUSQUASHES THE ONE INSULT MY COLS IN WOULD LET ME USE WAS CALLING SOMEONE A "BLUE GINGHAM MUSQUASH," SINCE PRETENDING TO BE RICH TO GET POWER WAS ONE OF THE WORST THINGS YOU COULD DO! IT'S THE ONE THING THE CHICKEN WOULD NEVER FORGIVE NOT THAT HE EVER FORGIVES MUCH, EXCEPT IN RARE CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT STILL!





WELCOME TO
MCZARGALD'S.
MAY I TAKE
YOUR OR
DER?

AFTER WE
DECIDED
WHAT WE
WANTED
TO EAT

WE NON LIVING AREN'T
HAVING ANYTHING I'M
THE CHAPERONE, AND
WE'RE ALL FAMILY TWO
VOUCHERS HERE THEY
WILL HAVE A HAMBURGER
WITH MAYONNAISE AND
EXTRA PICKLES, AND A
CHEESEBURGER WITH
SWISS CHEESE AND KET
CHUP. AND NO
SPECIAL MEAT,
IF YOU WOULD
THANKS TWO
CHOCOLATE
MILKS, AS WELL



THE MENU SAYS THE
TONKOTSU BURGERS
ARE MADE WITH PORK,
AND THE SABAMISO
ONES ARE MADE WITH
MACKEREL. WHAT'S
SPECIAL MEAT? IS IT
HAMBURGER MEAT MADE
OUT OF PEOPLE FROM
HAMBURG?

CLOSE IT'S
MADE OUT
OF HUMAN
CRIMINALS.
AN ONI
DELI
CACY.



WE'RE NOT CRIMINALS,
RIGHT? EVEN THOUGH I'M
BREAKING COMMANDMENT
73, AND SARANNA'S
BREAKING COMMANDMENT 97
BY EATING A CHEESEBURGER
WITH SWISS CHEESE?

NO THE CHICKEN'S
FOOD CRIMES DON'T
COUNT FOR
THAT



TECHNICALLY YOU ARE ALSO
BREAKING COMMANDMENT
72 DUE TO EATING A HAM-
BURGER WITH EXTRA MAYON-
NAISE AT ALL. BUT MANY
COMMANDMENTS HAVE SOME
REDUNDANCY. I ALSO DISLIKE
BEING CALLED NON LIVING,
JUST BECAUSE THIS DIMEN-
SION ASSUMES ALL LIFE IS
BIOLOGICAL. HAS THE TRANS-
DIMENSIONAL ROBOT LOBBY
MADE ANY PROGRESS THERE?



NOT YET BUT DON'T
WORRY BRIAN IT'S MO-
VING THROUGH THE BU
REAUCRACY, AND F WE
HAVE TO TAKE IT ALL THE
WAY TO THE PLEROMA
COUNCIL AT THE TOP TO
GET IT DONE WE WILL!



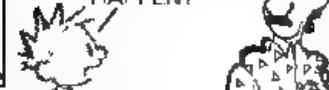
SO SOME PEOPLE STILL
FIND WAYS TO PUT EACH
OTHER DOWN, EVEN
HERE

UNFORTUNATELY BUT
WE KEEP ON TRYING
TO IMPROVE IT'S ALL
WE CAN DO



THERE WAS LESS OF THAT
IN THE NEW LIBERTY TOWN
I WAS IN IT TURNED OUT
THAT THE TOWNIES WHO'D
BACKSTAB YOU AND EACH
OTHER WHILE HIDING BE-
HIND A FAKE NICE ACT
USED TO DOMINATE, JUST
LIKE IN THE OLD TOWN,
BUT THEY GOT EFFECTIVE-
LY WIPED OUT

HOW'D THAT
HAPPEN?



SOMEONE SET UP A HOT
LINE THAT PEOPLE COULD
USE TO ANONYMOUSLY
TURN OTHER PEOPLE IN
FOR PRACTICING "POLITI-
CALLY DANGEROUS RELI-
GIONS." NOT THAT THE
TOWN DIDN'T HAVE ITS
SHARE OF THAT EVEN
THOUGH CHICKENISM WAS
EVERYWHERE OUTSIDE THE
TOWN, SOME INSISTED
ON TRYING TO
BRING IT INSIDE, EV-
EN THOUGH THE CHI-
CKEN FORBODE IT
AS A FAITH TEST



IT WAS REALLY SO COM-
MON THAT THEY NEEDED
A HOTLINE FOR IT?

NO, BUT A COMBINA-
TION OF NOT NEED-
ING EVIDENCE, ONLY
ACCUSATION, AND
THE TOWNIES' LOVE
OF GOSSIPING ALONG
WITH BACKSTABBING
SEALED THEIR
FATES



MOST OF THE TOWNIES
GLEEFULLY TURNED IN
THEIR OWN NEIGHBORS,
SOME OVER ACTUAL OFF-
ENSES, BUT MOST OVER
MADE UP OFFENSES TO
GET MORE STATUS FOR
THEMSELVES, AND THE
ENTIRE TOWN ENDED
UP IMPRISONED FOR
YEARS, IF NOT LIFE EX-
CEPT FOR A FEW LUCKY
ONES, BUT THEY
WERE SO FEW
THAT THINGS
FELL APART



BUT THEY PUT
THINGS BACK
TOGETHER BY
THE TIME YOU
GOT THERE?

BY IMPORTING NEW PEOP-
LE TO REPLACE THE IM-
PRISONED ONES, WHO
WERE EITHER CIVILIZED
ENOUGH TO HAVE SOME
LOYALTY TO FELLOW PEOP-
LE OR SMART ENOUGH
TO HOLD
THEMSELVES BACK
FROM GOING
AFTER EV-
ERYONE



THERE WERE RUMORS
THAT THE HOTLINE HAD
BEEN STARTED BY AN OUT-
SIDER WHO'D BEEN TAR-
GETED TOO MANY TIMES
AND FIGURED THEY COULD
USE THE TOWNIES' CRAB
BUCKET CULTURE AGAINST
THEM. NO ONE COULD
PROVE IT, BUT IT SERVED
AS A WARNING FROM THEN
ON AND KEPT THEM
IN LINE. LUCKY FOR
ME AND OTHERS LIKE
ME BUT I THINK IT
WAS MORE THAN
LUCK

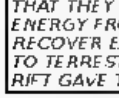


WHAT MAKES YOU SO
CERTAIN THIS TIME?

ENOUGH THINGS
WORKED OUT THAT I
FIGURED IT COULDN'T
BE RANDOM. I HAD TO
GET TWO JOBS TO SUR-
VIVE, BUT BOTH OF
THEM LED ME THE
RIGHT WAY IN THE
LONG TERM.



MAX THE FIRST WAS PILOTING
FASTER THAN LIGHT SPACE
CRAFT THERE WAS A POPULA-
TION OF CELESTIAL DINOSAUR
PEOPLE IN TOWN THEY'D
COME THROUGH A LOCAL RIFT,
LEAVING BEHIND A MASSIVE
SELF-CONTAINED CITY ON A
PLANET THAT WAS OTHERWISE
LITTLE MORE THAN DESERT
THEY WERE TIGHT LIPPED
ABOUT WHAT LED THEM HERE
MY COWORKER AND TEACHER,
KRALTAR, SAID THEY'D BEEN
EXILED FROM THE CELESTIAL
REALMS AND THE INJURIES
THEY TOOK FROM THAT MEANT
THAT THEY HAD TO DRAIN LIFE
ENERGY FROM THE PLANET TO
RECOVER ENOUGH TO ADAPT
TO TERRESTRIAL REALMS. THE
RIFT GAVE THEM NEW OPTIONS.



CELESTIAL WHY'D D
DINOSAUR THEY NEED
PEOPLE IN PLOTS FROM
SPACE EARTH?
CRAFT? WOW



MANY OF
THEIR PILOTS
DIED BEFORE
THEY COULD
ADAPT, AND
THEY WERE
AT WAR, IT
TURNED
OUT.



WHAT KIND OF WAR?

WITH CELESTIAL BIRD-
PEOPLE. THE SAME ONES
WHO, AFTER EXILING
THEM, ACHIEVED ULTI-
MATE POWER OVER
EARTH'S SOLAR SYSTEM
BY DRAINING LIFE FORCE
FROM THE REST OF
THEIR SPECIES, PLUS
EXTRA POWER FROM ANY
SOURCE THEY
CONSIDERED EX-
PENDABLE

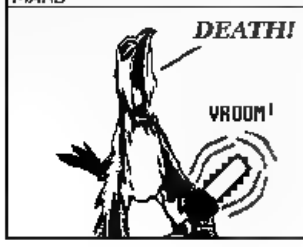


I THOUGHT YOU SAID
THEY WERE TIGHT
LIPPED ABOUT IT

KRALTAR AND I BOND-
ED AFTER AWHILE
FOR ONE THING, WE
HAD BOTH LOST
FAMILY TO THEM, EV-
EN THOUGH I'D
ONLY HAD TO
DEAL WITH
THE LUMBER-
CHICKEN



MAX HE WAS SURPRISED THAT
YALDABAABW WAS AT THE TOP
POSITION ON EARTH. AFTER
HOW THE WAR WENT, HE
THOUGHT SABAAWK, THE
CHAINSAWSHRIKE, WOULD BE
THERE INSTEAD OF BEING DE-
MOTED TO THE ARCHON OF
MARS

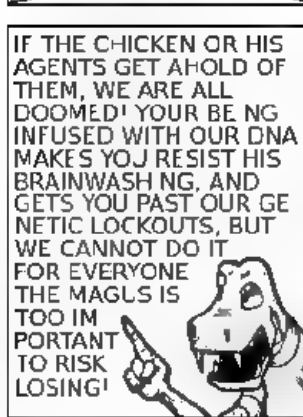
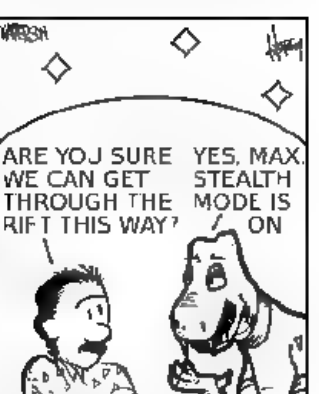
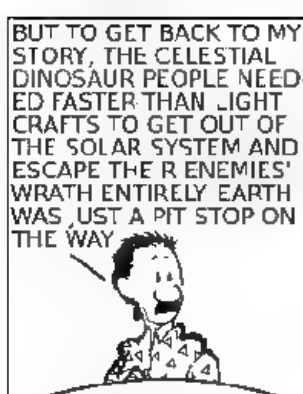
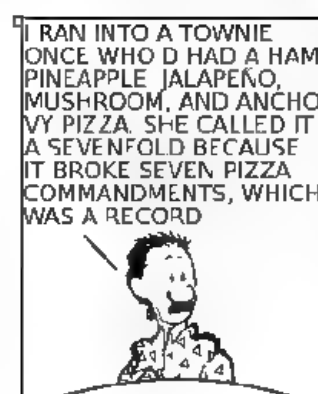
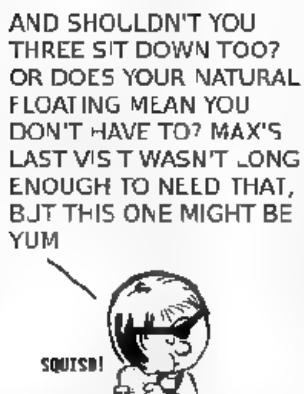
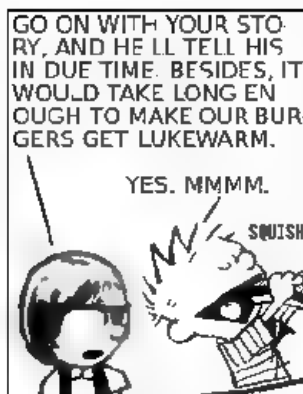
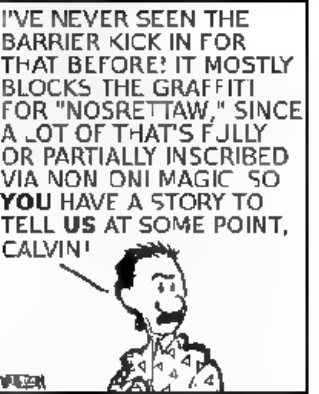
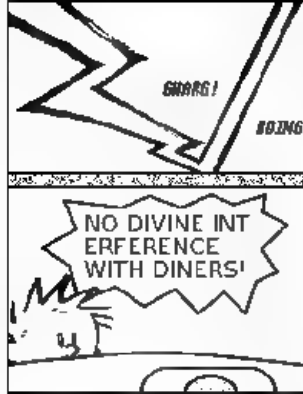
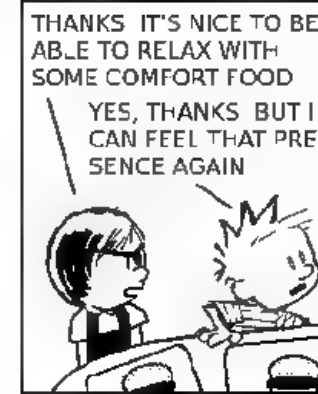
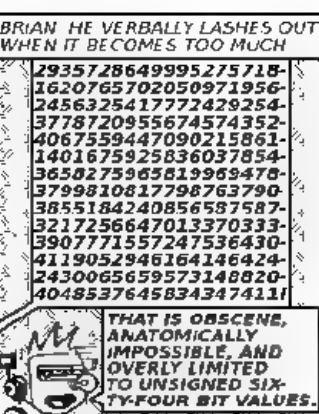
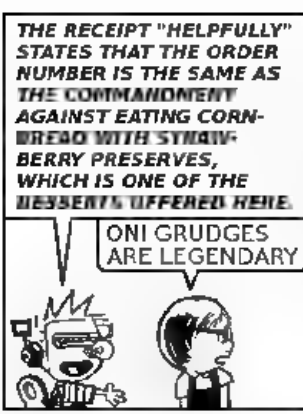


HOW DOES
IT HELP THEM
TO COME
HERE THEN,
SINCE THEIR
ENEMY RUNS
THIS WORLD?



THE MORE POWER
THEY SPEND ON CON-
TROL, THE LESS
THEY HAVE FOR
WAR, IT SEEMS





ACCORDING TO OUR BOOKS, HE OFFERED TO PAY JESUS' FOLLOWERS TO TEACH HIM THEIR DIVINELY GRANTED POWERS, BUT THEY REFUSED TO BE BOUGHT



BOOKS THEY WROTE, OF COURSE, LONG AFTER THE FACT.



AND THEN THEY SET THEMSELVES UP AS THE OFFICIAL RELIGION OF AN EMPIRE AND GLUTTED THEMSELVES ON AS MUCH AUTHORITY AND MONEY AS THEY COULD GET! IT WAS NOT ABOUT ANY PRINCIPLE OTHER THAN HOW DO YOU SAY IT? REFUSING TO SHARE THE PIE?



AND THESE SAME BOOKS CALL THEIR RELIGION MONOTHEISTIC, DESPITE ITS BEING A TRINITY, WHICH MAKES NO SENSE AT ALL!

RELAX REMEMBER, I'M ON YOUR SIDE, NOT THE RS



I APOLOGIZE. IT IS FRUSTRATING IF OUR ATTEMPT TO TURN YOU AWAY FROM CELESTIAL BIRD-STYLE THOUGHT HAD WORKED THEN WE'D BE MUCH BETTER OFF NOW



BESIDES, THAT LEVEL OF CORRUPTION TOOK CENTURIES TO COME ABOUT A FEW BLINKS OF AN EYE FOR YOUR KIND BUT GENERATIONS FOR MINE



RIGHT I FORGET SOME TIMES, BUT IT'S DIFFERENT FOR YOU, NOW.



THAT INFUSION OF OUR DNA SHOULD INCREASE YOUR NATURAL LIFESPAN, AS WELL. ODD HOW ONLY A FEW GENES CAN MAKE SUCH A DIFFERENCE, AND YET ARE UNDETECTABLE WITHOUT THE PROPER SCAN IN MANY WAYS, YOU ARE EFFECTIVELY ONE OF US



SO IF YOU HAD TO EAT ME, WOULD IT COUNT AS CANNIBALISM?

NO ONE HAS EVER ASKED ME THAT BEFORE! I GUESS?



I'M SURE YALDA BAAWK KILLED JESUS AND THE OTHER TWO JUST AFTER HE TOOK OVER.

NO, HE TURNED THEM ALL INTO A TRIPLE-HEADED BUTT.

SO HE'S GOTTEN CRAZIER!



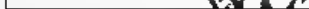
MORE THAN THAT THE TRIPLE BUTT LEADS THE CHICKEN'S BUTT ARMY, AND BRAINWASHES PEOPLE ON HIS BEHALF!



GNOSIS PRE-SERVE US! HE STILL HAS THAT FIXATION!



I KNOW NOT WHY MAMMALIAN SPHERICALS FASCINATE HIM, BUT HE'S PROBABLY FOUND A NEW WAY TO EXECUTE ENEMIES USING THEM. HE'S ALWAYS COME UP WITH SPECIAL WAYS TO DO THAT DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE USED TO DO IN THE OLD DAYS?



BEFORE HE GOT HIS AXE? YOU'VE TOLD ME SOME STORIES, YES

HAVE I MENTIONED THE HEART THING? NO BUT THAT INCIDENT IN THE DINER WITH THE GIRL WHO SAID "I'LL GIVE YOU MY HEART"



HE'D MAKE SOME BAD HEART-RELATED PUN, SHOOT HIS HEART OUT OF HIS CHEST LIKE A CANNONBALL, BLOW MASSIVE HOLES IN PEOPLE WITH IT, AND THEN GLOAT ABOUT HOW INFERIOR THEY WERE FOR DYING "BEWARE OF CHICKENS SHARING HEARTS," WE SAY NOW



SUPPOSE HIS HEART FUSED BACK INTO HIS CHEST AFTERWARD? OR DID HE MAKE HIMSELF LITERALLY HEARTLESS?



YES TO THE FIRST. HE KILLED ANYONE WHO REFERRED TO HIM AS THE SECOND



ANOTHER REASON WHY THERE ARE SO FEW CELESTIAL BIRD PEOPLE IS BECAUSE HE KILLED MANY OF THEM FOR MAKING FUN OF HIM WHEN HE WAS YOUNG AND PRACTICING THE HEART THING AS SOON AS HE GOT HIS AXE, ANYONE WHO CALLED HIM "HEART FALL OUT BOY" WAS CHOPPED UP BY IT



LIKE DARKSEID FROM OUR COMICS, WHO WAS ORIGINALLY NAMED UXAS? AND WHO PROBABLY KILLED EVERYONE WHO BOOED IT WITH S'S?



EVER SINCE HE GOT HIS AXE, WHICH HE PROCLAIMED MADE HIM A... WHAT'S YOUR TERM? BAD BUTTOCK? HE HAS BECOME MORE AND MORE UNHINGED BUT HIS SLIPPING GRASP ON REALITY ONLY HELPS US.



WHY THE SUDDEN RUSH TO LEAVE? YOU WERE TAKING THINGS SLOWLY UNTIL A FEW WEEKS AGO



WE DISCOVERED A CAVE WITH A DEAD ROBOT AND A MESSAGE INSIDE IT



THE ROBOT'S TOO OLD TO HAVE HAD ITS LIFE FORCE DRAINED BY OUR ADAPTATION TO THIS MORTAL PLANE, AND NO ONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO TRANSLATE THE MESSAGE. THE DINO DIRECTORATE HAS ERRED ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION AND ASSUMED IT IS A WARNING



MAX HE TOLD ME WHAT THE MESSAGE WAS, AND I MEMORIZED IT JUST IN CASE IT WAS WHAT THEY THOUGHT UNTIL BRIAN CAME ALONG MUCH LATER AND TURNED OUT TO BE ABLE TO TRANSLATE IT. BRIAN IT WAS NOT WHAT THEY THOUGHT "4275548363515100518 2949344473369913669 24145475853,0888269 2456798540937331348 3855485086787626942 2476998798257491054" IS MERELY A STATEMENT OF DIS-ORIENTATION THE WORST THING IN IT IS A VULGARITY INVOLVING OUR EVIL GOD OF, AMONG OTHER THINGS. INCOMPETENT DESIGN



YOU'RE PART DINOSAUR AND TAUGHT HELPING MAGICAL HERETIC DINOSAURS ESCAPE THE LUMBERCHICKEN IN SPACE? THAT IS SO COOL! IS ANY ONE GOING TO TEACH US ROBOT SPEAK?



MAX YOU'LL LEARN IT EVEN
TALLY OUR DISAPPOINTMENTS
ARE HARDER TO TAKE WHEN WE
DON'T KNOW ANY CURSES BAD
ENOUGH FOR THEM

SPEAKING OF MATES,
HOW IS YOURS DOING?
SK RRA IS RE-
COVERING NICELY

YOUR SECOND JOB AS A
CAREGIVER AND NON DE-
NOM NATIONAL COUNSE-
LOR MEANS YOU DEAL
WITH HEALTH CARE
SOMETIMES, YES? WHY IS
YOURS SO MUCH WORSE
THAN OURS, EVEN IN A
LIBERTY TOWN OUTSIDE
YALDABAANK'S
CONTROL?

I ONLY DEAL WITH IT
WHEN TRYING TO SUP-
PORT MY CLIENTS. IT'S
FOR MORALE, NOTHING
MORE. BUT THE ENTIRE
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM IS
CONTROLLED AT THE TOP
BY HIS FOUR HEALERS,
LIBERTY TOWN OR NOT

THE RELIGION OF JE-
SUS AND THE OTHER
TWO COMMANDED PEOP-
LE TO WORK FOR A LIV-
ING, WHETHER IT WAS
NECESSARY OR NOT. YAL-
DABAANK EXTENDED IT
TO "WORK OR DIE IN THE
FIRST CASE, YOU
ARE USEFUL IN
THE SECOND,
YOU ARE ENT-
ERTAINING."
WOULD HARD
WORKERS NOT
NEED GOOD HEALTH?

THEY DO, BUT
THE PEOPLE IN
CHARGE DON'T
THINK STRAIGHT
AND ACT AS
THOUGH THEY
HAVE AN INFINITE
SUPPLY OF WOR-
KERS TO USE UP

UNTIL
THEY
LEARN
OTHER-
WISE,
THE
HARD
WAY

THERE ARE EXCEPTIONS
PEOPLE CAN GO ON DISA-
BILITY, BUT IT'S A CRAP-
SHOOT WHETHER THEY
ACTUALLY GET IT. THE
NEED FOR IT DOESN'T
MATTER MUCH TO THE
PEOPLE IN CHARGE,
EITHER

DOES GETTING IT RELY
ON WHETHER YALDABA-
ANK'S POOP STICKS TO
THE WALL WHEN HE
LAUNCHES IT, OR DID
YOU MEAN "CRAPSHOOT"
IN THE GENERAL SENSE?
...MAYBE BOTH

THOSE DEFECTORS FROM
THE CELESTIAL BIRD PEOP-
LE SURE TOLD YOU A
LOT. IT'S A SHAME THAT
THEY'RE ALL DEAD NOW.
TALK OF HEALTH CARE
ALSO WORRIES ME. I NEV-
ER GOT SICK ENOUGH
TO NEED IT MUCH, BUT A
CLIENT OF
MINE'S
MATE DID,
AND IT'S
BAD.

YOU KNEW YOUR
HEALTH CARE SYS-
TEM WAS BAD GO-
ING IN, YES?

I DID, BUT... I THOUGHT
SOME OF THE AC-
COUNTS OF IT HAD TO
BE EXAGGERATED!

I CAN'T GIVE NAMES, BUT
MY CLIENT'S LUCKY
ENOUGH TO COUNT AS
DISABLED. HIS MATE, ON
THE OTHER HAND,
SHOULD COUNT, BUT
EVERYONE THEY CAN GET
TO REFUSES TO DO THE
TESTING, AND SHE JUST
KEEPS FALLING THROUGH
THE CRACKS

IS THIS NOT LIKE
YOUR FOOD QUEST
IN THE LAST LIBER-
TY TOWN? THEY
CAN PAY, BUT NO
ONE HAS TO DO
WHAT THEY'RE PAID
TO DO, SOMEHOW?

RIGHT. IT'S NOT
JUST DISABILITY.

A LOT OF PEOPLE
LIVING IN THEIR
PART OF TOWN
SINCE THE INCI-
DENT HAVE
COME DOWN
WITH
ARJENFLORB
SYNDROME.

THE SO
CALLED
LOWER
CLASS
DIS-
EASE?

YES, THAT ONE. THE ORCS
GOT IT FIRST, FOLLOWED
BY THE HUMAN ORC HY-
BRIDS, FOLLOWED BY
OTHER HUMANS. THE
COMMON KNOWLEDGE IS
THAT IT'S AN ORC AND LOW-
ER CLASS HUMAN DIS-
EASE, BUT IT CROPS UP
MORE IN THEM BECAUSE
OF THEIR BAD LI-
VING CONDI-
TIONS, WHICH
SET IT OFF IN
WAYS I DON'T
UNDERSTAND

A FEW OF OUR TELEPATHS
HAVE PICKED UP ON ANTI-
ORC SENTIMENTS. A PER-
SISTENT BELIEF IS THAT
THE ORCS SECRETLY
SERVE YALDABAANK,
SINCE THEY ARE DESCEN-
DED FROM DUNGEON
GOBLINS WHO DO OUR
TELEPATHS CAN
SHOW THIS IS
NOT THE CASE
BUT FEW LIS-
TEN TO US,
OTHER THAN
THOSE LIKE
YOU.

TELEPATHY STILL
MAKES ME NER-
VOUS, FOR BOTH
MYSELF AND THE
OTHERS. YOUR
KIND CAN READ
WORRY NOT OUR DNA
IN YOU SHIELDS YOU
FROM IT, FOR
ONE THING

AS FOR OTHERS, IT IS
NOT A DELIBERATE VIOLA-
TION OF PRIVACY. THE
ONES MAKING THEM-
SELVES HEARD ARE DO-
ING THE MENTAL EQUIVA-
LENT OF SHOUTING WHILE
THREE FEET AWAY IT IS
NOT LEAVES
DROPPING TO
HEAR EVERY
THING THEY
SAY UNDER
SUCH CIRCUM-
STANCES

IF PEOPLE KNEW
YOU HAD TELE-
PATHS, THEY'D
PROBABLY FORM
A MOB AND DRIVE
YOU OUT OF
TOWN. AT THE
VERY LEAST

MOST
LIKELY,
YES.

BUT IT'S TOO USEFUL TO
IGNORE, AS IT HELPS US
SURVIVE. DID YOU KNOW
THAT ONE OF YOUR "HOLY
DOCTORS" GOT NEAR
ONE OF OUR TELEPATHS
ONCE? WE GOT GREAT IN-
SIGHT INTO HOW THEY
INTERPRET THE WORLD

DARE I ASK
HOW?

THE THOUGHT WAS "I
AM MERCIFUL! I COULD
REMOVE THOSE UNWOR-
THY OF LIFE BY KILLING
THEM, BUT I STAND BACK
INSTEAD! I COULD SAY
THEY ALL HAVE "SLUG-
GISH SCHIZOPHRENIA,"
BUT I SAVE THAT FOR
THE ONES WHO
REALLY OFF-
END ME. AND
IS THERE EV-
EN **ONE** STA-
TUE OF ME
ON EARTH?

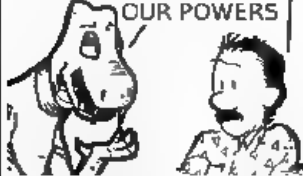
A HUMAN TURNED
DEMIGOD WANTS A **STA-
TUE**, AND FOR **THAT**?
AND HOW CAN YOUR TEL-
EPATHS READ DEMIGODS?

THE CELESTIAL BIRD
PEOPLE ARE OUR DES-
CENDANTS. WE CAN
READ THEM
AND THE R-
UP LIFTS-

SINCE I HAVE YOUR DNA, AM I AN UPLIFT OF YOURS, THAT CELESTIAL DINO-SAUER PEOPLE CAN READ? YES, BUT WE COULD READ YOU BEFORE THAT DOING SO IS HOW WE KNEW YOU WERE TRUSTWORTHY



I'M NOT SURE I LIKE THAT I'M AWARE BUT WE, AND ALL THOSE WITH OUR DNA ARE ONE OF THE FEW CELESTIAL SPECIES WITH RESISTANCE TO CELESTIAL BIRD POWERS, SINCE THEY DERIVE FROM OUR POWERS



EVEN YALDABAABWK, DESPITE HIS ASCENSION TO DEMIURGE, CANNOT USE HIS FULL POWER AGAINST US. THUS, WE MUST SURVIVE, IF THIS REALITY IS TO ESCAPE HIS PEOPLE'S YOKE, NO PLAN INTENDED



IS THERE ANY WAY TO BE IMMUNE TO TELEPATHY? BE A TELEPATH YOURSELF AND BLOCK IT, OR HAVE A MIND THAT IS ALIEN OR INFLUENCED BY ALIEN POWERS



THAT'S DISAPPOINTING AND YOU SAID I'M RESISTANT TO CELESTIAL BIRD BRAINWASHING, BUT YALDABAABWK DOESN'T DO THAT HIMSELF ANYMORE HE HAS HIS OLD TRINITY TURNED TRIPLE BUTT DO IT



BUT A MIND TOO ALIEN FOR TELEPATHIC READING IS EASIER TO ACHIEVE THAN YOU THINK. YOUR SECOND JOB INVOLVES COUNSELING OF A SPIRITUAL NATURE, YES?



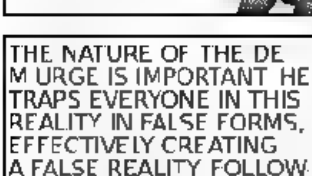
THEN YOU HAVE HEARD OF AMITABHA? HIS BROTHER AMOGHASIDDHI IS AN ENTITY SOME OF MY PEOPLE FOLLOW AND THERE IS A VARIANT OF DISCORDIANISM SOME OF THEM FOLLOW AS WELL



I'M NOT SURE "BROTHER" IS THE RIGHT TERM AND THERE ARE SO MANY DISCORDIAN VARIANTS THAT I'VE LOST COUNT OF THEM INDEED I WAS ABOUT TO EXPLAIN.



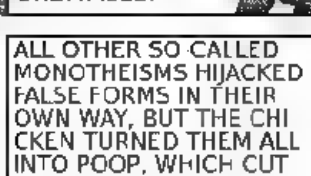
YOU KNOW OF GREY FACES, WHO THINK ALL ORDER IS GOOD AND ALL CHAOS IS BAD, DISREGARDING THE CREATIVE AND DESTRUCTIVE SIDES OF BOTH THAT ERIS TELLS US OF THE BAD GUYS OF DISCORDIANISM? IN OUR VARIANT, THE DEMIURGE IS THE ULTIMATE GREY FACE



IMPOSING HIS OWN ORDER HARDER AND HARDER, AND GETTING HARDER AND HARDER BACKLASHES OF CHAOS? SOUNDS LIKE THE CHICKEN



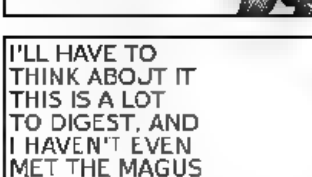
WHICH MAKES THIS REALITY GREYFACE HEAVEN, WHICH ALL NON GREY FACES WILL ESCAPE EVENTUALLY, EITHER WHEN ALL IS DESTROYED OR THEY FIND THEIR OWN WAYS OUT NON GREY FACES ARE ALL HERE AGAINST THEIR WILL, AS TARGETS FOR THE GREYFACES.



IT'S NOT GREYFACE HEAVEN UNLESS THE GREYFACES HAVE NON GREYFACES TO STOMP ON? WITHOUT THEM, WILL THE GREYFACES STOMP ON EACH OTHER AND DESTROY THEMSELVES INSTEAD?



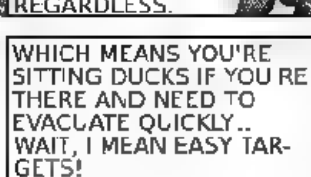
THE NATURE OF THE DEMIURGE IS IMPORTANT HE TRAPS EVERYONE IN THIS REALITY IN FALSE FORMS, EFFECTIVELY CREATING A FALSE REALITY FOLLOWERS OF AMITABHA, AMOGHASIDDHI, AND THEIR ASSOCIATES FOCUS ON FALSE REALITY AND HOW TO ESCAPE IT MORE THAN ANY DEMIURGE



THIS IS INTERESTING, BUT WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH GETTING AN TELEPATHICALLY IMMUNE ALIEN MIND?



ALL OTHER SO CALLED MONOTHEISMS HIJACKED FALSE FORMS IN THEIR OWN WAY, BUT THE CHICKEN TURNED THEM ALL INTO POOP, WHICH CUT DOWN ALMOST ALL OF OUR OTHER ENEMIES IN THIS THOSE IN FALSE FORMS ARE REBORN IN THEM UNTIL THEY ARE FREED FROM THEM REGARDLESS.



THERE IS A WAY THAT YOU MIGHT FIND EASIER THAN OTHERS THE MAGUS CAN SHOW YOU, IF YOU CAN CONVINCE HIM THAT YOU CAN PUT OTHERS ABOVE YOURSELF A BODHISATTVA, A CHAOSATTVA, OR WHATEVER TERM YOU PREFER.



I'LL HAVE TO THINK ABOUT IT THIS IS A LOT TO DIGEST, AND I HAVEN'T EVEN MET THE MAGUS UNDERSTANDABLE. THERE IS STILL TIME



THE PRIORITY RIGHT NOW IS TO GET HIM AND THE REST OF OUR PEOPLE TO THIS WORLD OUR OLD WORLD IS STILL LIVABLE IF ONE REMAINS IN THE CITY, BUT THERE IS AN ENERGY FIELD AROUND IT THAT IMPEDES OUR FTL DRIVES



WHICH MEANS YOU'RE SITTING DUCKS IF YOU'RE THERE AND NEED TO EVACUATE QUICKLY... WAIT, I MEAN EASY TARGETS!



I HAVE TALKED ENOUGH YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THAT CLIENT OF YOURS AND HIS SHOULD BE DISABLED MATE, THOUGH THEY ARE NOT FAMILY OR FRIENDS?



COULDN'T YOU
USE A LANGUAGE
THE CHICKEN GOD
WOULDN'T KNOW?

AND AMITABHA DIDN'T
TALK MUCH ABOUT HIS
OTHER ASSOCIATES, AT
LEAST WHEN WE TALKED.

GODS CAN BE QUICK AT
PICKING UP LANGUAGES
THE CHICKEN ALSO HAS
ACCESS TO THE OLD
TRINITY'S POWER OF
SPEAKING IN TONGUES
IT WASN'T WORTH THE
RISK

BRIAN'S
QUICK, TOO!



MAX TOLD ME ABOUT ONE
OF CALVIN'S TEST ANSWERS.

Yakka Foob Mog Grug
Pubbawup Zink Wattoom
Gazork. Chumble Spuzz
IT IS SUCH A SUCCINCT
DESCRIPTION OF WHAT YOU
CALL NEWTON'S FIRST LAW,
AS FOR AMOGHASIDDHI, HE
IS GREEN WHERE AMITABHA
IS RED, AND FOCUSES MORE
ON VANQUISHING EVIL, BUT
I DO NOT KNOW MUCH MORE



WE DO NOT H
JAPANESE PE
THEY ARE NO
JAPANESE. TH
ARE MEXICAN

I DESCRIBED IT "IN MY
OWN WORDS," AND YOU
ONLY NEEDED TEN
WORDS TO FIGURE IT
OUT? I'M GLAD YOU'RE
ON OUR SIDE!



SO THIS IS HOW YOU
TWO BONDED? CON-
VERSING ON SPACE-
CRAFT TRIPS?

AFTER HE TAUGHT
YOU HOW TO FLY
THE CRAFT, TOO?

PRETTY MUCH THE
TRIP I'VE BEEN TELL-
ING YOU ABOUT IS
ONE OF THE MOST
IMPORTANT ONES

AND IT'S
NEAR THE
POINT WHERE
HE MEETS ME.



I NOTICE YOU MADE A SLIP
OF THE TONGUE, RIGHT
WHEN YOU WERE TALKING
ABOUT D NO DISCORDIAN
ISM AND TELEPATHY IMMUN-
ITY GUESS THAT HAS
SOMETHING TO DO WITH
THE TRIP, TOO?



THE WAY IT ENDED, YES
BUT I DIDN'T MAKE THAT
CONNECTION THEN

I WONDER WHAT THE
CELESTIAL DINOSAUR
VERSION OF ERIS
LOOKS LIKE?

I DON'T KNOW
MAYBE KRALTAR
DOES?



IS KRALTAR ANY
WHERE AROUND
HERE? DID HE
DIE, TOO?

AND WHY DIDN'T
YOU GO TO THE
RIFT INSTANTANE-
OUSLY WITH FTL?

HE'S NOT DEAD.
NOT YET, ANY
WAY. HE'D HAVE
VISITED ME IF HE
WERE.

SARANNA,
YOUR EYE
PATCH
SWITCHED
SIDES!



THE GOBLIN MAGIC
KEEPING JS HERE
WEAKENED FOR A
SECOND, WHICH
MADE REALITY
SHIFT FOR A BIT
IT'S HARMLESS IF
GOBLIN MAGIC
WERE PERFECT.
THEY'D HAVE WON
THAT IT
AGAINST THE CHI-
CKEN

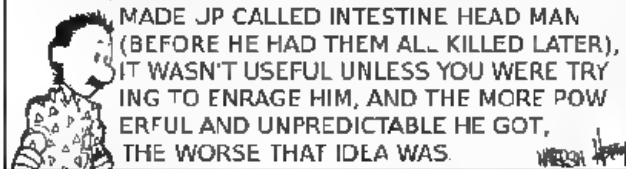


I HOPE
THAT IT
HOLDS!

TO ANSWER YOUR OTHER
QUESTION, THE RIFT'S
ENERGIES IMPEDED THE
FTL DRIVE, TOO, SO WE
HAD TO DO THE EVACUA-
TION TO EARTH THE
SLOW WAY ONCE THEY
ALL WERE ON EARTH,
THEY COULD
HAVE A PROPER
EXODUS.



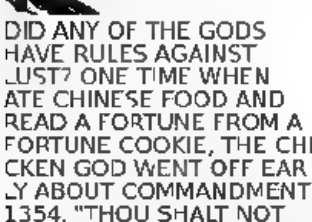
THEY NEEDED SAVING, NOT JUST BECAUSE I'D GOT-
TEN TO KNOW KRALTAR AND A FEW OTHERS, BUT
ALSO BECAUSE THEY KNEW THINGS ABOUT THE CHI-
CKEN AND HIS ALLIES THAT NO ONE ELSE LIVING DID.
SOME THINGS WERE MORE USEFUL THAN OTHERS,
THOUGH WHILE IT WAS FUNNY TO KNOW THAT THE
CHICKEN'S FRIENDS, IN HIS EQUIVALENT OF HIGH
SCHOOL, DREW COMICS OF A CHARACTER THEY



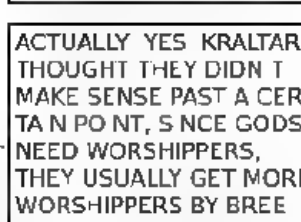
MADE JP CALLED INTESTINE HEAD MAN
(BEFORE HE HAD THEM ALL KILLED LATER),
IT WASN'T USEFUL UNLESS YOU WERE TRY-
ING TO ENRAGE HIM, AND THE MORE POW-
ERFUL AND UNPREDICTABLE HE GOT,
THE WORSE THAT IDEA WAS.

MAX, I DID LEARN SOME HANDY
TRICKS SOMETIMES, THOUGH

THE EKAFUEL LEVELS ARE
GOOD WHAT WAS THAT
AGAIN ABOUT RULES
AGAINST BLASPHEMY? IF
YOUR GODS ARE OFFEND-
ED BY A FEW LITTLE
WORDS, IT'S TIME TO GET
NEW GODS, MY MOTHER
ALWAYS SAID! YAL-
DABAABK LEARNED
THE WRONG LES-
SONS FROM THE
OLD TRINITY IF HE
S EXTENDING ITS
RULES FOR THAT!



HE WENT ON TO SAY WHAT THE
CHICKEN AND THE OLD TRINITY
SHOULD DO TO THEMSELVES
REMAINING PERFECTLY CALM
AND NEVER ONCE RAISING HIS
VOICE THE AIR STARTED BLU-
ING AROUND HIM AS HE CON-
TINUED, AND BY THE TIME HE
GOT TO WHAT THE FOUR OF
THEM SHOULD SPECIFICALLY
DO TO THEIR INTERNAL OR-
GANS WITH A THAGOMIZER, A
DURIAN AND A SAXOPHONE.
MY EARS ACTUALLY STARTED
BLEEDING AND A STORM STAR-
TED FORMING AT THAT POINT,
HE STOPPED AND SAID, "SEE?
I JUST GAVE THEM MIGRAINES!"



SO KRALTAR KNOWS
SUPER BLASPHEMY
THAT ACTUALLY HURTS
GODS? HOW DID HE
LEARN IT?

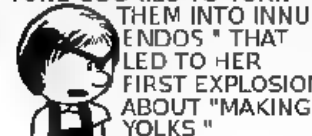
AND DOES HE KNOW
ANY OTHER WAYS TO
HURT GODS?

HIS PEOPLE HAVE
HAD TO FIGHT
GODS BEFORE,
SOME OF WHICH
CAME FROM HIS
PEOPLE.

AND THEY'VE
WON TOO



DID ANY OF THE GODS
HAVE RULES AGAINST
LUST? ONE TIME WHEN
ATE CHINESE FOOD AND
READ A FORTUNE FROM A
FORTUNE COOKIE, THE CHI-
CKEN GOD WENT OFF EAR-
LY ABOUT COMMANDMENT
1354, "THOU SHALT NOT
ADD 'IN BED' TO THE ENDS
OF FORTUNES FROM FOR-
TUNE COOKIES TO TURN
THEM INTO INNU-
ENDOS" THAT
LED TO HER
FIRST EXPLOSION
ABOUT "MAKING
YOLKS"



ACTUALLY YES KRALTAR
THOUGHT THEY DIDN'T
MAKE SENSE PAST A CER-
TAIN POINT, SINCE GODS
NEED WORSHIPPERS,
THEY USUALLY GET MORE
WORSHIPPERS BY BREE-
DING NEW ONES, AND
SOME LUST IS
NEEDED TO
GET THEIR
WORSHIPPERS
TO BRED
FAST ENOUGH.



WHAT'S AN ORGY, THEN? MY COUSIN SAID IT'S ONE UNLESS YOU'RE BREEDING IN ONE POSITION SHE WOULDN'T DESCRIBE, WITH THE LIGHTS OUT FOR COMMANDMENT 11, AND NOT TAKING JOY IN IT FOR ITS OWN SAKE.



UH... IT'S BREEDING WHILE TAKING JOY IN IT. THE CHICKEN HATES JOY, AS YOU KNOW, UNLESS IT'S JOY IN HIM ALONE.



YEAH, WHAT IS IT?

Y KES! AND HUH

MAX MUTTERED SOMETHING UNDER HIS BREATH THAT SARANNA DIDN'T HEAR BUT I DID. "PRAISE EBVOOT FOR NOT MAKING ME TRY TO EXPLAIN ORGIES IN KID-FRIENDLY DETAIL." I FOUND OUT LATER THAT EBVOOT WAS A GOD OF SMALL FAVORS THAT MAX HAD WORKED WITH FOR YEARS, AND INTRODUCED KRALTAR TO

SO BRINGING ENOUGH JOY TO PEOPLE SHOULD HURT THE LUMBERCHICKEN TOO! HOW MUCH WOULD WE NEED?



THERE'S NOT ENOUGH POTENTIAL JOY, OR BLASPHEMY FOR THAT MATTER, TO DEFEAT HIM ENTIRELY ON THEIR OWN. THE PROPHECY SPEAKS OF SEVERAL PEOPLE GOING TO WAR AGAINST HIM, WHILE MASS JOY AND BLASPHEMY BY OTHERS FINISH HIM OFF FOR GOOD.



DOES BREAKING THE FOOD COMMANDMENTS HURT HIM TOO, SINCE THERE ARE SO MANY OF THEM?



I KNOW WHAT A THAGOMIZER IS, BUT WHAT'S A DURIAN?

THEY DON'T SEEM TO, SO THEY'RE LIKELY A POWER TRIP ON HIS PART AND MADE UP ON THE FLY. SINCE THEY'RE SO BADLY ORGANIZED, DID YOU KNOW THERE ARE SEPARATE SECTIONS FOR HOT DOGS, CHILI DOGS, AND CORN DOGS? AND HE HAS A COMPLETE BAN ON DOPPIAZA CURRY SAUCE, FOR SOME INEXPLICABLE REASON, IN COMMANDMENT 26956.



I WISH THOSE RULES DIDN'T HURT HIM, SO I COULD HAVE PUT COTTAGE CHEESE ON A CHILI DOG, OR GOCHUJANG ON A CORN DOG, OR DOPPIAZA CURRY SAUCE ON A VEG ETABLE LASAGNA. BUT, ANYWAY, OF COURSE YOU'D KNOW WHAT A THAGOMIZER IS, CALVIN, BECAUSE IT'S DINOSAUR RELATED! BUT A DURIAN IS A FRUIT THAT LOOKS LIKE A SPIKY YELLOW COCONUT.



IT APPARENTLY STINKS, TOO, BUT I'VE ONLY EVER HAD DURIAN CANDY.



WHICH TASTE'S LIKE CARAMEL MIXED WITH RAW ONION. MAX LIKES IT. I SPIT IT OUT WHEN I TRIED IT YUK!

I SUPPOSE THERE ISN'T ENOUGH TIME TO TEST EVERY OTHER TYPE OF COMMANDMENT TO FIGURE OUT ALL THE ONES THAT HURT HIM? I MEAN, COMMANDMENT 89898, "THOU SHALT NOT NAME THINGS BASED SOLELY ON HOW COOL THOSE NAMES SOUND," IS ONE I'VE BROKEN SOMETIMES IN PRIVATE.



THAT ONE DOESN'T HURT HIM EITHER, UNFORTUNATELY. I'VE WATCHED YOU FROM HERE SOME TIMES, AND THINGS LIKE CALLING THE BIG BANG "THE HORRENDOUS SPACE KABLOOIE," OR CALLING A PERIWINKLE A "SORCERER'S VIOLET" DON'T DO ANYTHING TO HIM AT ALL THAT I CAN TELL.



MAX, BUT LET ME GET BACK TO THE TRIP WITH KRALTAR. WE WERE ALMOST AT THE RIFT BY THAT POINT.

ARE YOU NOT WORRIED ABOUT WHETHER YOUR BROTHER'S TELLING YOU THE TRUTH?

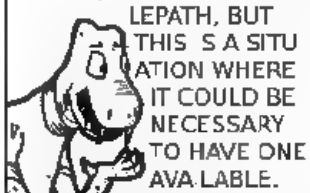


HE SAYS CALVIN TAKES MORE AFTER ME, WHICH IS TRUE.

I'VE HAPPENED TO LIVE IN THE SWEET SPOT BETWEEN DEMIJURGE REGIMES, WHERE I'M OLD ENOUGH TO BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, BUT NOT TOO OLD TO CHANGE MY WAYS. AS LONG AS HE THINKS HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO CONVERT ME, HE WON'T TURN ON ME BESIDES. WE ARE BROTHERS, WHICH SHOULD STILL MEAN SOMETHING.



BUT PART OF YOU STILL WORRIES THAT YOUR BROTHER WILL CHOOSE THE CHICKEN OVER YOU, AND TURN ON YOUR NEPHEW AS AN EXTENSION OF YOU, YES? I'M NO TELEPATH, BUT THIS IS A SITUATION WHERE IT COULD BE NECESSARY TO HAVE ONE AVAILABLE.



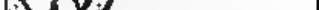
THAT'S TRUE AND HOW DO YOUR PEOPLE HANDLE THINGS WITH TELEPATHY AVAILABLE? THE ETHICS INVOLVED SEEM SKETCHY TO ME. I CAN UNDERSTAND USING IT TO HELP STAY ALIVE, BUT



IT IS UNCOMMON WE STARTED USING IT MORE AFTER BEING BACKSTABBED ONE TOO MANY TIMES, WHEN A TELEPATH WAS AROUND BY SHEER COINCIDENCE AND SAVED US. THE MAGUS IS OUR STRONGEST LIVING TELEPATH, BUT EVEN AFTER HIS FALL, I'M SURE TO CONVINCE YOUR KIND TO TURN AWAY FROM CHICKEN LIKE THOUGHT, WE KEPT TRYING



A POLITICALLY POWERFUL HUMAN WHOSE NAME I FORGET MADE A DEAL TO HEAR A GROUP OF US OUT WE WERE DISGUISED AS HUMANS, AS THE MAGUS HAD BEEN. BUT IT TURNED OUT TO BE AN AMBUSH. TELEPATHY WAS HOW WE DISCOVERED THE PLOT IN TIME TO ESCAPE.



WE COMPLAINED THAT HE BROKE HIS END OF THE DEAL AND HE SAID, "YOU CAN'T MAKE ME DO ANYTHING I DON'T WANT TO DO," AND SICKED HIS PEOPLE ON US. THE TELEPATH FOUND HE DID NOT WANT TO DIE WHERE HE STOOD, BUT WE MADE HIM DO THAT AFTER WE DROPPED OUR DISGUISES AND PUT HIM IN SHOCK.



AND WE DID THE SAME TO THE REST OF THEM, SINCE IT WAS EITHER THEM OR US, AS THE TELEPATH ALSO FOUND AFTER THOSE HAVING TELEPATHS AVAILABLE BECAME STANDARD PROCEDURE.



I UNDERSTAND YOU WERE THERE.

NO WHEN I SAID "WE," I MEANT MY SPECIES IF I HAD BEEN THERE. I WOULD LIKELY REMEMBER THE BETRAYER'S NAME. I KNOW HISTORY, BUT I AM NOT A HISTORIAN, AND THE EONS BLUR IN MY MIND AFTER LONG ENOUGH, AS IN ALL PHYSICAL MINDS.



HOW DO YOU KNOW TELEPATHS ARE TELLING THE TRUTH, THOUGH, IF YOU'RE NOT ONE?



INTENTS PRODUCE COLORED AURAS AROUND THEM, AND THESE ARE UNFAISFABLE.

THAT EXPLAINS WHY I OCCASIONALLY SEE ONE OF YOUR PEOPLE FLASH A CERTAIN COLOR! I THOUGHT I WAS SEEING THINGS!

EXACTLY IF ONLY YOU COULD SEE LL TRAVIOLET AS WE CAN!

IT'S ALSO THE ONLY RELIABLE WAY TO FIND YALDA-BAAWK SUPPORTERS. THE CHICK WHISTLES THEY CLAIM ARE SO WIDE SPREAD AS TO BE USELESS AND WHILE TELEPATHS CANNOT DIRECTLY DETECT BRAINWASHING, THEY CAN DETECT INTENT TO SERVE THE CHICKEN

CALVIN WAIT, CHICK WHISTLES? MAX SYMBOLS, NUMBERS, AND OTHER THINGS THE CHICKEN CLAIMS AS SIGNS OF SUPPORT. CALVIN HOW DO NUMBERS WORK THAT WAY? MAX THEY DON'T HE MAKES THEM UP CALVIN LIKE HOW? MAX SUPPOSEDLY ONE IS HIS BECAUSE HE'S THE ONE TRUE GOD, TWO IS HIS BECAUSE HIS AXE CUTS THINGS IN TWO. THREE IS HIS BECAUSE HE BENT THE THREE OF THE OLD TRINITY TO HIS WILL, ETC CALVIN WHAT ABOUT SIX WHICH HE DOESN'T LIKE? MAX AN UPSIDE DOWN NINE STANDING FOR THE LETTERS IN "HOLY CHICK" HIM AS A KID WHEN IT SUITS HIS PURPOSES.

GOOD BUT IT'S NOT JUST MY BROTHER. HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE ANOMALOUS CASES OF ARJENFLORB SYNDROME? ONES THAT OC-CJR FAR AWAY, N SEEM-INGLY RANDOM PLACES?

YES. THERE ARE RUMORS THAT IT MIGHT ACTUALLY BE DIVINE PUNISHMENT FOR HERESY, WHICH STARTED WITH THE ORCS SINCE THEY'RE UNENS-LAVEABLE AND MOVED TO SIMILAR HUMANS.

WHICH ARE JUST THAT RUMORS

RJMORS WHICH, IF THEY GET FROM THE LOWER DOCTORS TO THE FOUR HEALERS AT THE TOP, MAY WELL GIVE THEM AN EXCUSE TO STOP ALL TREATMENT OF IT THE FOUR ARE, RARELY, MERC FJL, WHICH IS WHY EVERYONE KEEPS TRYING WITH THEM, BUT THE KEY WORD IS RARELY

IS THIS NOT LIKE HOW IT WAS IN THE LAST FEW YEARS OF JESUS AND THE OTHERS, WHERE THEIR FOLLOWERS, INSTEAD OF NOT TAKING JOBS THEY WOULD DISAPPROVE OF TOOK THE JOBS ANYWAY, REFUSED TO DO THEM DUE TO THEIR "SINCERELY HELD RELIGIOUS BELIEFS" AND EXPECTED TO BE PAID REGARDLESS?

WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH IT? WITHOUT TELEPATHY, SINCERE BELIEF IS UNPROVABLE, SO IT MAY AS WELL BE EXCUSE AH I GUESS IT!

THE OLD TRINITY SHOULD HAVE BEEN OFFENDED BY ITS FOLLOWERS USING IT TO GET OUT OF DOING WORK, BUT IT WAS GOING CRAZY IN THE CHICKEN WAY EVEN THEN EVEN SO, IT'S NOT FAIR TO JUDGE THE WHOLE CONCEPT BY HOW SOME PEOPLE WEAPONIZE IT I COULD SAY THE SAME ABOUT CONSENT, AFTER ALL

MY APOLOGIES IT'S EXHAUSTING TO KEEP FIGHTING THIS WAR, AND ALTHOUGH NEITHER OF OUR SPECIES ARE PERFECT, IT IS DIFFICULT TO FULLY UNDERSTAND YOUR SPECIES' VERSIONS OF SOME THINGS I ASSUME THERE WAS FAVORITISM IN HOW THAT VERSION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM WAS ENFORCED, HOWEVER?

APOLOGY ACCEPTED JUST BECAUSE 'M IN THIS SPECIES DOESN'T MEAN I UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING IT DOES, EITHER AND, YES, THERE WAS DEFINITE FAVORITISM A WORSHIPPER OF RAZZENFRATTEN, GOD OF PROFANITY, COULDN'T GET ACCOMMODATION TO SWEAR CREATIVELY FIVE TIMES A DAY, EVEN WHEN HE WOULD NOT DO IT IN FRONT OF CUSTOMERS OR COWORKERS.

AND THE RENEGADE BRANCH OF CHRISTIANS, WHO FOCUSED MORE ON COMPASSION FOR ALL AND IGNORED THE BITS WHERE, TO QUOTE WIZARD SUNFLARE, "YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO LET JESUS SCOOP YOUR BRAIN OUT AND PUPPET YOUR AROUND," WERE NOT ACCOMMODATED EITHER? THE CHICKEN HAS NO PITY FOR THEM NOW.

I'M PRETTY SURE THEY'RE EXTINCT NOW, AND THE CHICKEN ONLY USES THEM AS A SCAPEGOAT WHEN HE HAS BAD DAYS THEY WERE THE FIRST TARGETS OF THE ANTI-HERESY SQUADS, REMEMBER SIMILAR TO WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR WHAT WERE THEY? ALBIGENSIANS?

THEY WERE NOT OURS, BUT THEY WERE INFLUENCED BY THE MAGUS IDEAS SOME OF MY PEOPLE THOUGHT THEM HERETICS, BUT THEY WERE CLOSE ENOUGH TO BE SAVED FROM CHICKEN-STYLE THOUGHT WITH A FEW PUSHES IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION UNTIL THEY WERE MASSACRED.

ALONG WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS, WHOSE ONLY CRIME WAS LIVING IN THE WRONG PLACE. "KILL THEM ALL AND LET GOD SORT THEM OUT," INDEED. AND THEN YOU ALL GAVE UP TRYING TO SAVE US, WENT TO WAR WITH THE CELESTIAL BIRDS YOURSELF, LOST, GOT EXILED TO A PLANET WITH NO SAPIENT LIFE, AND HAD TO EAT ITS LIFE ENERGY TO SURVIVE

I WAS NOT AWARE THAT YOUR KIND OBJECTED TO HERESY THAT MUCH AND WIZARD SUNFLARE WAS A PHILOSOPHER? ANOTHER UNCOMMON QUALITY IN THEM AND SHE DABBLED IN IT, IN NOW BURNED TEXTS

SHE ALSO DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN CONSENT AS A WAY TO JUSTIFY AMORAL SELFISHNESS AND CONSENT WITH FAIRNESS INCLUDED, CALLING THE LATTER "INFORMED CONSENT." IT'S A SHAME THAT WISDOM IS SO OFTEN CONSIGNED TO THE REALM OF GHOSTS.

RIGHT, THE ANIMISM THING YOU TOLD ME ABOUT ALTHOUGH HOW DO YOU AVOID BEING HAUNTED BY AN ENTIRE PLANET'S WORTH OF LIFE FORCE? DO MEAT EATERS GET HAUNTED BY THE ANIMALS THEY EAT, TOO? SOME OF THE CELESTIAL AND DEMONIC SPECIES I'VE SEEN ARE OBLIGATE CARNIVORES WHO CAN'T EAT ANYTHING ELSE!

THINGS DONE FOR SURVIVAL'S SAKE THAT MINIMIZE HARM GENERALLY DO NOT RESULT IN HAUNTINGS AS FOR THE CASE THAT EVERYONE BRINGS UP, ABOUT THE VEGAN HAUNTED BY THE SPIRITS OF VENGEFUL TOMATOES UNTIL SHE WENT MAD, I DON'T KNOW THAT CASE HAS CERTAIN MISSING DETAILS TOMATOES ARE USUALLY MELLOW, FROM WHAT HEAR.

TO GET BACK TO MY BROTHER'S LETTER, HE SAYS THAT CALVIN'S BEEN ACCEPTABLE, WHICH IS A TERM HE USES FOR "GOOD, BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH" AND ONLY BY HIS STANDARDS YES?

I ASKED HIM IN MY LAST LETTER IF I COULD VISIT AGAIN, AND HE SAID "YOU'RE MY BROTHER AND I LOVE YOU, BUT YOUR LACK OF OPEN PIETY'S A PROBLEM. I SUSPECT IT'S EITHER ANTI-CHICKEN BIAS OR HERESY. IF YOU CAN PROVE OTHERWISE, THEN YES. IF NOT, I WILL NOT HAVE YOU PUTTING IDEAS IN MY SON'S HEAD, SO NO"



THAT IS WORRYING YAL DABAARK'S TREATING BIAS AND HERESY DIFFERENTLY'S ALSO SURPRISING HE TREATED THEM IDENTICALLY WHEN HE FIRST ATTAINED GODHOOD



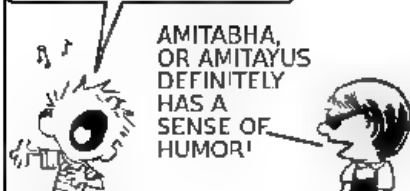
IT WAS PROBABLY TO GIVE HIMSELF AN EXCUSE TO MAKE MORE COMMANDMENTS BREAKING THE ONE ABOUT CHANGING THE LYRICS TO CHICKMAS CAROLS FOR FUN IS BIAS, BUT NOT HERESY. I FORGET ITS NUMBER, BUT YOU KNOW THE ONE



CALVIN WOW! LIKE WHAT? MAX. ONE THAT I HEARD WHEN I WAS A KID. BACK WHEN IT WAS STILL A CHRISTMAS CAROL, WAS "JOY TO THE WORLD THE SCHOOL BURNED DOWN, AND ALL THE TEACHERS DIED! EXCEPT FOR THE PRINCIPAL, WHO'S SITTING ON THE TOILET BOWL, THEN SOMEBODY FLUSHED HER DOWN, THEN SOMEBODY FLUSHED HER DOWN. THEN SO-O-O-O-SOMEBODY FLUSHED HER DOWN!" CALVIN HA HA! WITH SOME TEACHERS I'VE HAD. THAT FITS! SARANNA. SING "ROCK ME AMITAYUS" FOR US CALVIN!

ONE SHORT MUSICAL INTERLUDE

♪ EVERYONE HAS BEEN YOUR MOTHER! BEEN YOUR MOTHER, BEEN YOUR MOTHER, BEEN YOUR MOTHER! ♪



AMITABHA, OR AMITAYUS DEFINITELY HAS A SENSE OF HUMOR!

AND THEN BACK TO BUSINESS

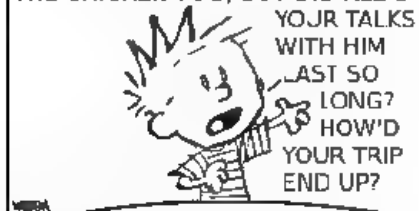
WHEN YOU FIRST SANG IT, IT'S A GOOD THING NOBODY WALKED IN AND ONLY HEARD THE "YOUR MOTHER PART, OR YOU'D LIKELY END UP IN TROUBLE!"



THAT ALMOST HAPPENED! I HAD TO PRETEND IT WAS ABOUT MOM!

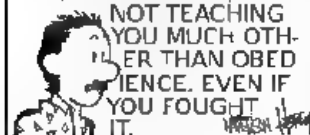
HA HA!

IT'S COOL HEARING ABOUT HOW YOU WENT ON AN EXTENDED ADVENTURE THAT GOT YOU A CELESTIAL DINOSAUR FRIEND FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION, AND HOW HE AND HIS KIND ARE AT WAR WITH THE CHICKEN TOO, BUT DID ALL OF

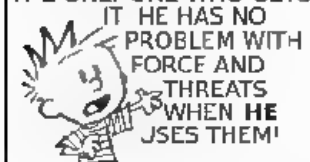


YOUR TALKS WITH HIM LAST SO LONG? HOW'D YOUR TRIP END UP?

I'M JUST ABOUT AT THE END OF THE TRIP THE CONVERSATION WAS ONLY A FEW MINUTES LONG, BUT IT SEEMS LONGER IN THE TELLING I'VE RAMBLED, BUT MY BROTHER'S LETTERS SUGGESTED THAT HE WAS KEEPING YOU IN A TINY LITTLE BOX, SO TO SPEAK, AND NOT TEACHING YOU MUCH OTHER THAN OBEDIENCE. EVEN IF YOU FOUGHT IT.



HE KEEPS SAYING, "I HATE FORCE AND THREATS I'LL DO SOMETHING ONLY IF I CHOOSE TO DO IT" I FIGURED OUT THAT WAS A BAD IDEA AFTER HE CHOSE TO SEND ME TO THE DUNGEON, BUT IT'S GOOD TO KNOW I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO GETS



IT HE HAS NO PROBLEM WITH FORCE AND THREATS WHEN HE USES THEM!

MAX TYPICAL BUT LET ME WRAP ALL THIS UP

IF MY NEPHEW GETS DECLARED BIASED OR A HERETIC, HE'LL GET THE SAME KIND OF TERRIBLE HEALTH CARE MY CLIENT'S MATE IS GETTING, AND WITH ARLEN FLORB SYNDROME SHOWING UP IN RANDOM PLACES



EEEEEEEEEE!

THAT IS THE RIFT PROXIMITY ALARM WE SHALL ARRIVE IN A FEW MOMENTS

THAT'S WHY YOU WORRY HER FATE COULD EASILY BE YOUR NEPHEW'S FATE, SO YOU ARE HOPING IT SOMEHOW WORKS OUT



ONE LAST QUESTION HOW CAN THE MAGUS BE LOST? CAN'T YOU STILL TALK TO HIS GHOST?



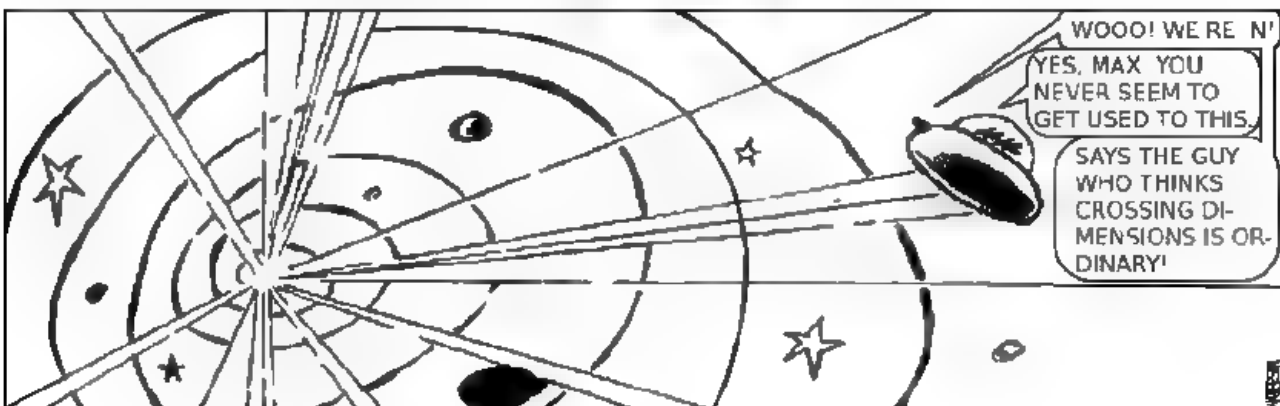
THE CHICKEN HAS DEVELOPED WAYS TO SILENCE GHOSTS WHOM HE DEEMS BAD ENOUGH

I ALSO HAVE ONE LAST QUESTION IF THE MAGUS COULDN'T BUY JESUS' POWER OR GET IT FROM HIM FOR FREE, WHAT WOULD HAVE WORKED?



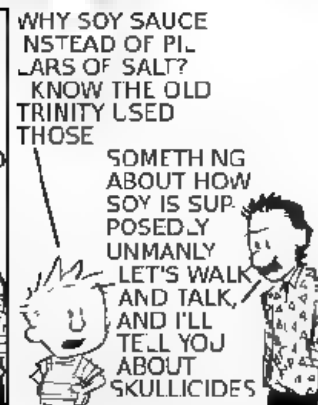
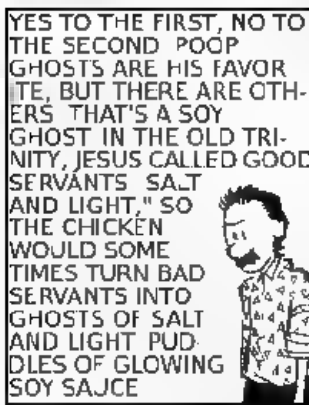
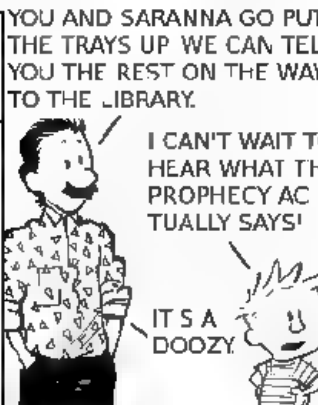
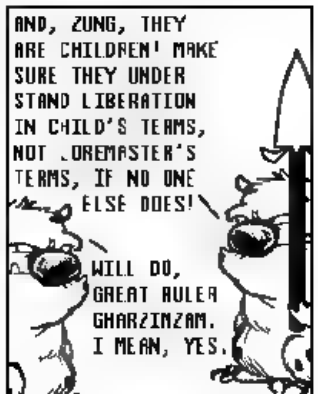
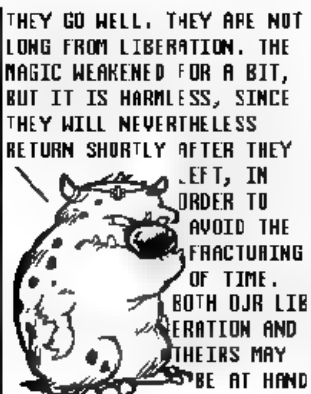
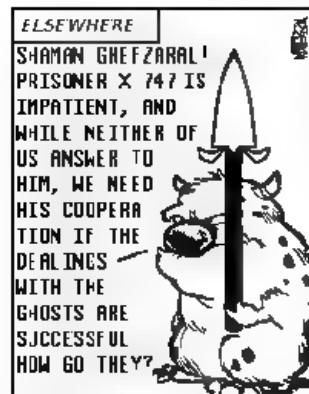
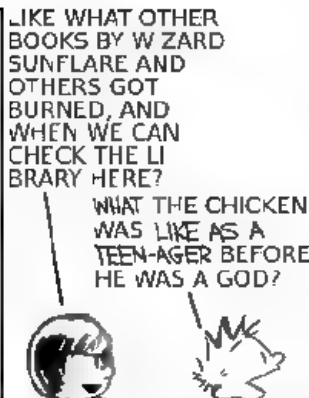
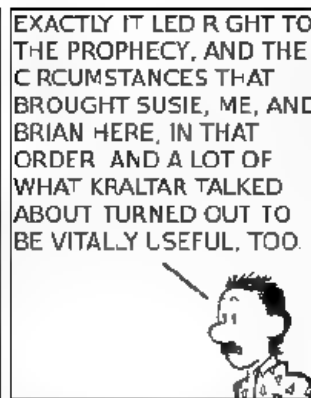
OTHER THAN FORCE YOU MEAN? I DON'T KNOW.

UNFORTUNATE BUT THAT IS THE PAST, AND THIS IS THE PRESENT THE RIFT BECKONS!



WOOO! WE'RE N! YES, MAX YOU NEVER SEEM TO GET USED TO THIS.

SAYS THE GUY WHO THINKS CROSSING DIMENSIONS IS ORDINARY!



I DON'T THINK I WANT TO KNOW, MYSELF THE WORST CASE OF THE CHICKEN'S RAGE THAT I KNOW OF WAS WHEN HE TURNED. WHAT WAS THE NAME? NED SOMETHING? INTO A SOY GHOST



FOR SAYING "HAPPY HOLI DAYS" INSTEAD OF MERRY CHICKMAS "



RIGHT, THAT GUY!

HE DID IT ON IM PULSE THEN HE WANTED TO IN TERROGATE NED TO SEE IF HE KNEW ANYONE ELSE WHO WAS DOING THAT

BUT HE PUT SO MUCH POWER INTO TRANSFORMING NED THAT HE COULDN'T UNDO IT, AND NED'S MIND WAS TOO ALIEN IN THAT FORM FOR TELEPATHY TO WORK



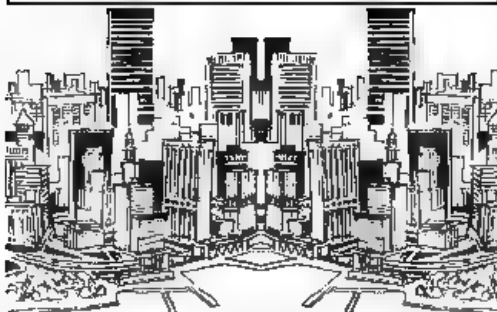
SO HE HAD TO LEARN A TINY BIT OF SELF-CONTROL! GOOD!

SUCH BEHAVIOR RIVALS THAT OF OUR GODDESS OF INCOMPETENT REVENGE, A LESSER WIFE IN THE GOD OF INCOMPETENT DESIGN'S HAREM. AS MY PEOPLE WOULD SAY ABOUT HER.

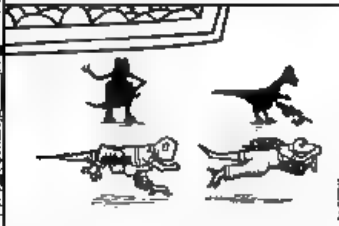


NEDD PROPER REVENGE'S HARD

MAX AFTER WE LANDED, WE WAITED ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY FOR THE REFUGEES. I'D SEEN ENOUGH CEL DINOS TO KNOW WHAT THEY LOOKED LIKE IN GENERAL BUT KRALTAR SAID THE MAGUS WAS OF A DIFFERENT BREED.



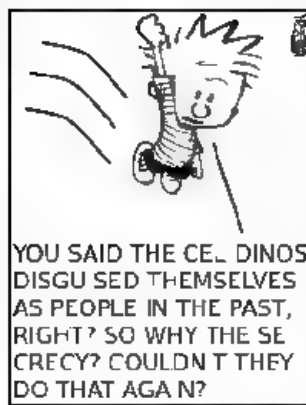
OUR CRAFT COULD ONLY HOLD A MAXIMUM OF FOUR PASSENGERS, SO TWO BESIDES KRALTAR AND ME THERE WERE A LOT MORE REFUGEES THAN THAT IN THE CURRENT BATCH THAT CROWDED BEFORE US BUT THERE WERE JUST ENOUGH OTHER CRAFTS TO TAKE THEM.



AND THEN A FEATHERY BLUR DARTED IN TO MY FIELD OF VISION THAT WAS SIMON MAGUSSAURUS, ARRIVING IN STYLE



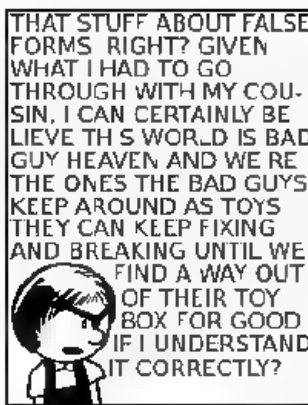
BUT FOR THIS MISSION WE NEEDED SECRECY



YOU SAID THE CEL DINOS DISGUISED THEMSELVES AS PEOPLE IN THE PAST, RIGHT? SO WHY THE SECRECY? COULDN'T THEY DO THAT AGAIN?



WHEN THE CHICKEN ASCENDED TO GODHOOD, HE GOT ENOUGH POWER TO SEE THROUGH MAGICAL DISGUISES BY NON GODS ALSO. ALL THE CEL DINOS SELECTED FOR THIS MISSION HAD THE MAGUS MAKE THEM IMMUNE TO TELEPATHY BEFORE HAND THE CHICKEN'S AGENTS COULD PICK THEM ALL OUT BASED ON THAT



THAT STUFF ABOUT FALSE FORMS RIGHT? GIVEN WHAT I HAD TO GO THROUGH WITH MY COUSIN, I CAN CERTAINLY BELIEVE THIS WORLD IS BAD GUY HEAVEN AND WE'RE THE ONES THE BAD GUYS KEEP AROUND AS TOYS THEY CAN KEEP FIXING AND BREAKING UNTIL WE FIND A WAY OUT OF THEIR TOY BOX FOR GOOD IF I UNDERSTAND IT CORRECTLY?

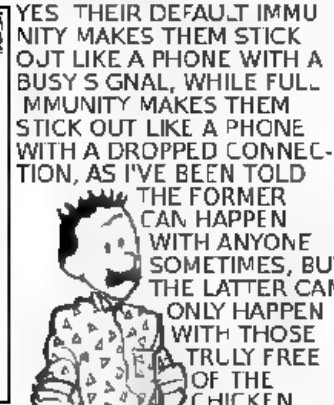


YES, THAT'S A GOOD SUMMARY ALTHOUGH IT'S A SHAME YOU HAD TO GROW UP LIKE THAT

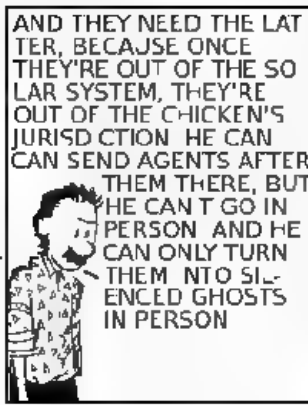
OUR PARENTS DIDN'T DO MUCH BETTER, JUST SO YOU KNOW



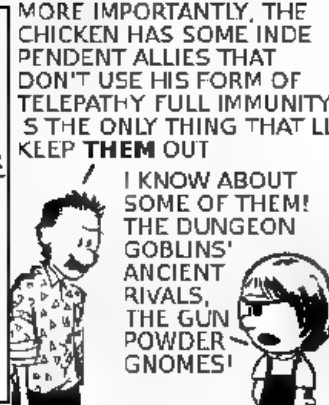
I DON'T GET IT YOU SAID THEY'RE IMMUNE TO CHICKEN STYLE TELEPATHY BY DEFAULT DOESN'T THAT MAKE THEM STICK OUT ALREADY? AND, IF SO, WHY GO TO MORE TROUBLE JUST TO STICK OUT MORE?



YES THEIR DEFAULT IMMUNITY MAKES THEM STICK OUT LIKE A PHONE WITH A BUSY SIGNAL, WHILE FULL IMMUNITY MAKES THEM STICK OUT LIKE A PHONE WITH A DROPPED CONNECTION, AS I'VE BEEN TOLD THE FORMER CAN HAPPEN WITH ANYONE SOMETIMES, BUT THE LATTER CAN ONLY HAPPEN WITH THOSE TRULY FREE OF THE CHICKEN

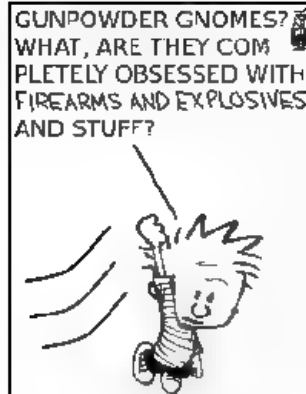


AND THEY NEED THE LATTER, BECAUSE ONCE THEY'RE OUT OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM, THEY'RE OUT OF THE CHICKEN'S JURISDICTION HE CAN SEND AGENTS AFTER THEM THERE, BUT HE CAN'T GO IN PERSON AND HE CAN ONLY TURN THEM INTO SILENCED GHOSTS IN PERSON

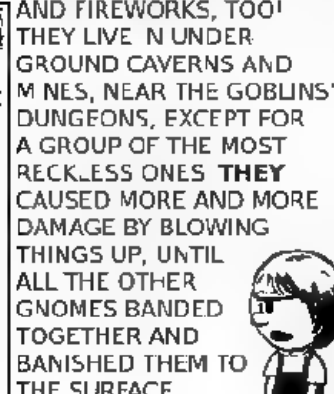


MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE CHICKEN HAS SOME INDEPENDENT ALLIES THAT DON'T USE HIS FORM OF TELEPATHY FULL IMMUNITY'S THE ONLY THING THAT'LL KEEP THEM OUT

I KNOW ABOUT SOME OF THEM! THE DUNGEON GOBLINS' ANCIENT RIVALS, THE GUN POWDER GNOMES!



GUNPOWDER GNOMES? WHAT, ARE THEY COMPLETELY OBSESSED WITH FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES AND STUFF?



AND FIREWORKS, TOO! THEY LIVE UNDERGROUND CAVERNS AND MINE, NEAR THE GOBLINS' DUNGEONS, EXCEPT FOR A GROUP OF THE MOST RECKLESS ONES THEY CAUSED MORE AND MORE DAMAGE BY BLOWING THINGS UP, UNTIL ALL THE OTHER GNOMES BANDED TOGETHER AND BANISHED THEM TO THE SURFACE



DID THEY ADAPT TO THE SURFACE BY ONLY COMING OUT AT NIGHT, AND COVERING THEMSELVES WITH TRENCHCOATS AND FEDORAS?

ACTUALLY, YES, AT THE DIRECTION OF THEIR LEADER, HAYWRE HARRY!



THAT MIGHT EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED TO US LATER THAT NIGHT

THE BANISHED TRIBE MOSTLY SWITCHED THEIR FOCUS TO GUNS CULTURALLY, THEY CLAIMED TO BE THE ONLY GOOD GUYS WITH GUNS, AND ALL OTHERS WERE BAD GUYS WITH GUNS WHO HAD TO DIE

SO THEY'RE RADICAL TERRORISTS WHO WANT TO SHOOT EVERY ONE WHO ISN'T THEM? DAD'S COMPLAINED ABOUT TERRORISTS A LOT, BUT NEVER ABOUT GNOME TERRORISTS!



THEY'RE USUALLY SMART ENOUGH TO ONLY GO AFTER "UNDESIRABLES," AND THEY HAVE A TENDENCY TO DECIDE THAT FELLOW GUN GNOMES ARE SUDDENLY BAD GUYS WHEN THEY WANT SOMETHING. THE OLD TRINITY LET THEM GET AWAY WITH A LOT BECAUSE ANY GUN RESTRICTIONS WOULD STOP THEM FROM EVENTUALLY RULING EARTH BY MASS SHOOTING ALL THE NON-BELIEVERS.



RIGHT. WHEN THE COM-PASSIONATE RENEGADE CHRISTIANS WENT EX-TINCT, BELIEF IN THE RAPSHOOT REPLACED BELIEF IN THE RAPTL RE AMONG THE OTHERS. AND THE CHICKEN EXPLOITED THAT WHEN HE TOOK OVER, OFFERING AUTONOMY IN THE LIBERTY TOWNS INSTEAD OF IMMEDIATE EXECUTIONS.



AND THE GUN GNOMES HAD WINNOWED THEMSELVES DOWN TO A TINY GROUP BY THAT POINT TO SURVIVE, THEY WILL NOWLY SERVE THE CHICKEN NOW AND SHOOT ONLY WHO HE WANTS SHOT. THE GOBLINS WARNED ME ABOUT THEM EARLY ON, AND EVEN THE OTHER GNOMES DESPISE THEM NOW. 'VE HEARD



WHY DID THE CHICKEN MAKE A DEAL WITH THEM INSTEAD OF JUST ENSLAVING THEM AS HE DID THE GOBLINS?



DUNGEONS FIT HIS PURPOSES MORE THAN CAVERNS OR MINES, AND THE GOBLINS TENDED TO BE STRONGER THAN GNOMES. ALSO, THE GUN GNOMES COULDN'T HURT HIM WITH THEIR GUNS, AND THEY NEEDED PROTECTION FROM ALL THE ENEMIES THEY'D MADE. BEING FORCED TO FOLLOW THE CHICKEN'S RULES ALSO PUT SOME LIMITS ON THEM, BUT I'M NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND ONE OF THE RULES.



THEY CAN'T BE FULLY DISARMED, BECAUSE THEY CAN TRANSFORM CERTAIN BODY PARTS INTO GUNS AND USE THOSE, AND ONE RULE FORBIDS TURNING SPERM INTO BULLETS. UH, IT WOULD BE TOO HARD TO AIM SO MANY AT ONCE!



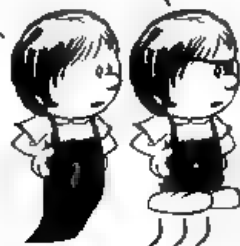
MY COUSIN ONCE SAID SHOOTING SOMEONE WAS JUST LIKE MAKING YOLKS WITH THEM, SINCE YOU'RE EITHER TAKING OR MAKING LIFE, SO SHOOTING THEM THE WRONG WAY ACTUALLY BREAKS THE MATING RULES. IF YOU SHOOT THEM WITH THOSE BULLETS, YES.



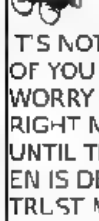
THAT MISSION COULD HAVE GONE A LOT WORSE, THEN, IF THEY'D GROWN MORE GUNS AND THAT DOES FINALLY EXPLAIN COMMANDMENT 890, ABOUT NOT TURNING SPERM INTO BULLETS, AND COMMANDMENT 889, ABOUT NOT TURNING SPERM LAUNCHERS INTO GUNS.



BUT WHAT IS SPERM, ANYWAY? I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS, EITHER! AND WHY DOES THE CHICKEN GO OFF ABOUT IT?



OTHER THAN AS A WORD THAT CAN FREAK DAD OUT, I DON'T KNOW EITHER! IT'S NOTHING ANY OF YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT RIGHT NOW. NOT UNTIL THE CHICKEN IS DEPOSED. TRUST ME.



MAX, BUT I'M GETTING AHEAD OF MYSELF AGAIN. THE MAGUS WAS FRIENDLY ENOUGH, BUT I WONDERED WHY HE SEEMED A BIT DISTRACTED. I CAN SEE VETHION AND KHALARI IN THE SKY NOW IF I CAN SEE MARS AND SATURN IN THE SKY ON EARTH, IT'S TIME.



WHAT TIME IS THAT? AND I'M MAX KRALTAR SAID HE TOLD YOU ABOUT ME.



YES, HE DID, AND YOU HAVE MY THANKS FOR BEING AN ALLY OF OUR PEOPLE. AS FOR THE TIME, A PROPHECY MAY BE COMING TRUE.



ONE THAT MAY WELL END YALDA-BAAWK'S POWER.

BUT AS EXCITING AS THAT IS, THERE'S THE MATTER OF KEEPING IT OUT OF THE WRONG MINDS.



THE MAGUS MEANS IMMUNITY FROM TELEPATHY, AS I SPOKE OF EARLIER. I'VE HAD IT FOR AWHILE. DO YOU TRUST ME WHEN I SAY IT WILL DO YOU NO HARM, AND HELP YOU IN THE LONG TERM?



MAX, I DID. MY NEXT QUESTION WAS, "WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?"

SO HE PAUSED THE WHOLE MISSION TO GET RID OF YOUR FALSE FORM? I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THEY WERE UNDER A TIME LIMIT!



WASN'T THE ONLY ONE THERE WERE A FEW OTHER HUMANS THERE WHO NEEDED IT, TOO. HE JUST HAP-PENED TO TALK TO ME FIRST. HIS VERSION OF THE LIBERATION RITUAL WAS ALSO RATHER QUICK. A FEW MINUTES OF CHANTING AFTER WE TOOK VOWS TO USE OUR NEW STATUS TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE OUT OF THIS SO-CALLED REALITY.



WHY WERE VOWS NECESSARY, SINCE HE COULD READ YOUR MINDS?

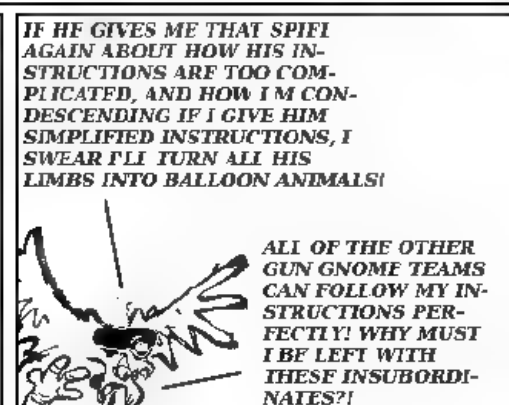
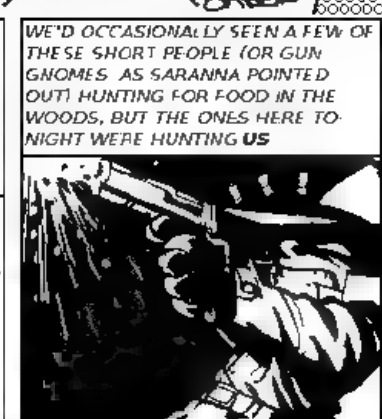
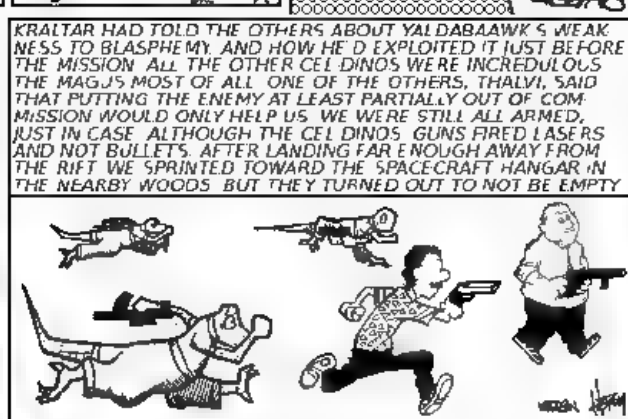
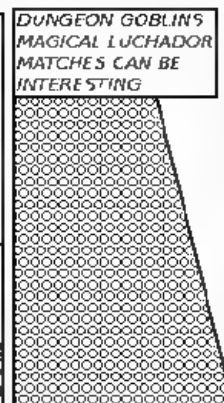
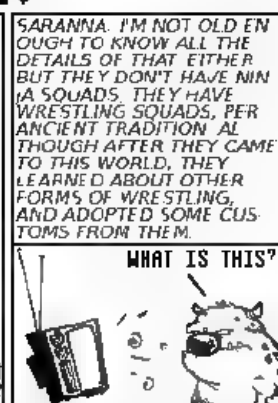
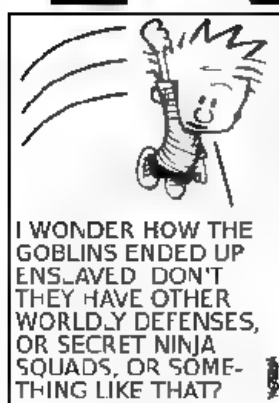
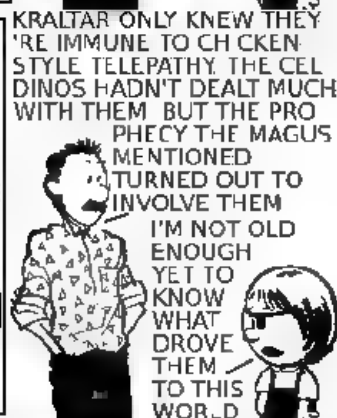
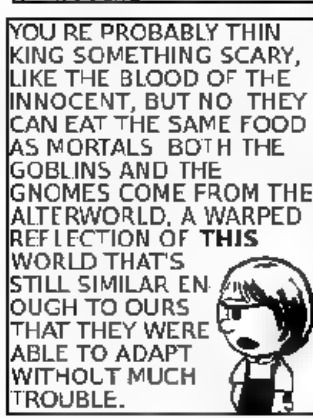
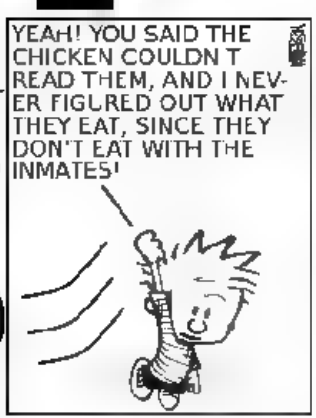
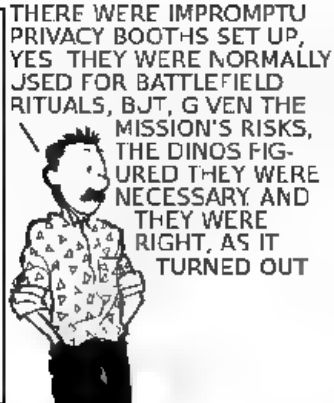
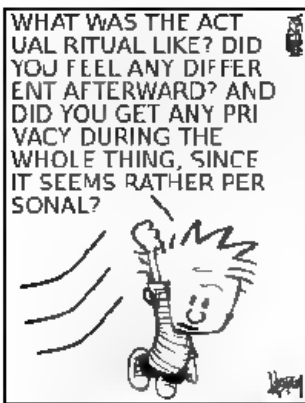
THE IMPORTANCE OF CONVICTION, AND A WAY FOR US TO MORE EASILY STICK AROUND AS GHOSTS, IF NEED BE.



VOW TO STAY AROUND LONG ENOUGH TO HELP MY BROTHER AND SISTER IN LAW IF THEY CAN BE HELPED, AND TO HELP MY NEPHEW REGARDLESS. AND IF THE CHICKEN BANS PHILLY CHEESESTEAKS IN ANY FORM, I VOW TO COME BACK AROUND ON PRINCIPLE. FOR THIS, I AT-TAIN GNOSIS.



MAX, BREAKING ONE ARBITRARY RULE IN YOUR VOWS WAS APPARENTLY A TRADITION AS WELL.



IT'S NOT FAIR THAT ONLY I SUFFER! MY BELOVED BUT VICEROY, SINCE YOU'RE ALSO VULNERABLE TO BLASPHEMY, YOU CAN SHARE IN MY MIGRAINE, AS A GOOD UNDERLING SHOULD!

PTH!

BBTTPPBPPP!

I HAVE LOWERED THE LIGHTS. I SERVE THE TR...

...TET RARCH OF BIRDS! MAY HE EVER REIGN!

GOOD! I'LL GO MAKE MYSELF FEEL BETTER BY INFECTING SOME HERETICS WITH ACCELERATED ARJENFLORE SYNDROME. IT'S NOT KILLING ALL THE RIGHT PEOPLE OR DOING IT FAST ENOUGH, ON ITS OWN!

MAX AFTER THE FIRST SHOOTER HAD GOTTEN OFF A FEW SHOTS, A SECOND SHOOTER PULLED OUT HIS GUN AND JOINED HIM. WE DUCKED BEHIND TREES AND SHOT BACK THERE WERE ONLY A FEW OF THEM. BUT THEIR BULLETS TRACKED US, SOMEHOW!

FEY MAG C CAN IMPROVE SOMEONE'S AIM. NEVER PLAY DARTS WITH A GOBLIN UNLESS THEY'RE FIRST BOUND TO NOT USE MAG C, AS THE SAYING GOES

THAT WOULD EXPLAIN IT. THE SEEKING WAS IM PERFECT, AND HIT THE TREES FOR THE MOST PART. WE FINALLY TOOK THEM ALL DOWN MOSTLY WITH THE CEL DINO LASERS SET TO WIDE BEAM

MAX AND APPARENTLY THE TRACKING STOPPED WHEN THEY DIED. THERE WAS ONE LAST BULLET IN THE AIR, AND IT WAS CURVING TOWARD US UNTIL IT WASN'T. IT ENDED UP GOING RIGHT INTO ME, AND THE MAGUS WAS BEHIND ME AT THE TIME AND LOWER TO THE GROUND. SO IF I HADN'T TAKEN IT HE WOULD HAVE TAKEN IT IN THE NECK

AGH! I'VE BEEN SHOT!

FIND THE NEAREST HEALER!

ELSEWHERE AGAIN

WHAT?! THEY HAVE TARGET-SEEKING MAGICAL BULLETS, AND ONLY ONE OF THEIR SHOTS CAUSES A DECENT INJURY. LET ALONE GETS ANYWHERE NEAR THE RIGHT TARGET?! I SHOULD HAVE GUIDED THEM MYSELF! IF ONLY THIS MIGRAINE WEREN'T MAKING ME GO CROSS-EYED!

IT FOULED MY AIM! SOME OF THE PEOPLE I INFECTED WERE THE WRONG ONES! WHY MUST SOME OF THEM BE SO MUCH ALIKE? OH, WELL. RANDOM INFECTIONS SHOULD INCREASE PROPER FEAR OF ME!

BACK AMONG THE GHOSTS

IS THAT WHEN YOU DIED, MAX? IT WAS NEVER CLEAR TO ME AFTER OUR LAST CONVERSATION

NO HE DIDN'T DIE UNTIL A DIFFERENT INCIDENT A FEW WEEKS LATER!

SUSIE'S RIGHT THE CEL DINOS' MAGICAL HEALING WORKED MUCH BETTER THAN OUR MUNDANE VERSION, EVEN WITHOUT THE CHICKEN'S RUINING IT

GOOD!

YOU WERE LUCKY THE GNOMES ONLY HAD MAGICALLY AIMED GUNS, AND NOT ROCKET LAUNCHERS OR SOMETHING! UNLESS THE DINOS' MAGICAL HEALING WAS JUST THAT GOOD!

INDEED! ONE SMALL PIECE OF METAL IMPALING YOU NON-ROBOTS IN THE WRONG PLACE CAN SO EASILY BREAK YOU. SUCH VULNERABILITY SHOULD MAKE YOUR KIND MORE CAUTIOUS, BUT I HAVE LEARNED THAT IT IS NOT THE CASE FROM MANY GHOSTS HERE.

MAX, I CERTAINLY WAS LUCKY I WAS GOOD AS NEW IN ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES, AND THEN THE MAGUS WANTED TO SEE ME ABOUT SOMETHING

MARS AND SATURN ARE VISIBLE IN THE SKY HERE! THE PROPHECY'S TRUE, AND YOU ARE PART OF IT! THE CHICKEN SHALL FALL!

BUT BEFORE THAT SINCE YOU TOOK A BULLET MEANT FOR ME AND LIKELY SAVED MY LIFE, WHAT BOON WOULD YOU HAVE FOR THAT?

...SAVE MY NEPHEW

YOU MEAN LIBERATE HIM THE WAY I DID YOU, YES?

YES. IT'S A WAY TO KEEP HIM OUT OF THE CHICKEN'S TALONS IF THINGS REALLY GO BAD.

CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT! ALL THOSE ON OUR SIDE IN THE PROPHECY NEED TO BE LIBERATED AND YOUR NEPHEW IS AMONG THEM! BRING HIM TO ME (AND THE OTHERS IF YOU CAN), AND I WILL LIBERATE THEM ALL!

THANK YOU! I'M STILL TRYING TO PROCESS EVERYTHING, FROM MY BRUSH WITH DEATH TO THE IDEA THAT I'VE LIKELY BEEN REINCARNATED A BUNCH OF TIMES, AND NOW THERE'S A PROPHECY SINCE I'M IMMUNE TO TELEPATHY NOW, SHOULDN'T I KNOW THE PROPHECY, SINCE I'M ALSO IN IT?

YOU SHOULD! GIVE ME A MOMENT TO FIND ONE OF OUR LORE MASTERS!

IF IT'S COMPLEX ENOUGH IS THERE A SAFE WAY TO WRITE IT DOWN, OR MUST I MEMORIZE IT?

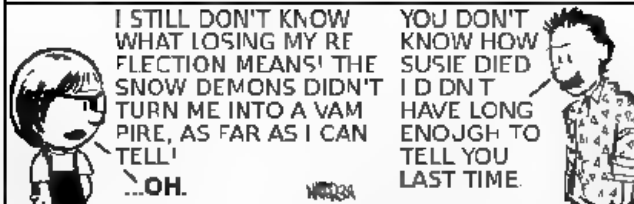
The Prophecy

The destroyers of the chicken are a dimension-traveling chowderhead with the blood of both a hero and a traitor, a nature-twisting seer who gains insight after they start to lose their reflection, a guide who leads them from low paths to high, and a courageous animus who channels the power of six. Only when the chowderhead and the seer are brought together will destiny begin to guide, and only when the power of six becomes known to all four will destiny be fulfilled.

The hero will save a wizard when worlds of war and liberation are seen twice over, and die when someone they trust turns on them. The traitor will gain and lose power by betraying everyone they hold dear, last of all themselves. The reflector will take the blow meant for what it reflects. The guide will be hidden from their enemies until those they must guide know what must be done. The animus will fight the rear while the other

three fight the front

Through their allies, the four will bring together the powers of gods, celestials, fey, and demons, and the strengths of technology, magic, logic, illogic, and goblin know-how. The day will be won by the twisting of space and the unexpected changing of sides.

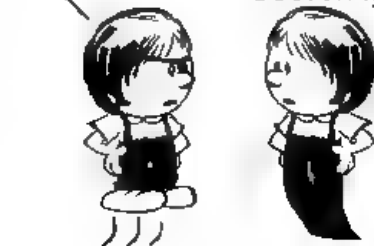


ELSEWHERE, AGAIN

THE GUN GNOME SQUAD IS ALL DEAD, BUT MOST OF THEIR CORPSES ARE INTACT ENOUGH THAT I CAN LISTEN THROUGH THEIR EARS! WHAT? THE RANDOM MAN WHO GOT SHOT IS HEARING ABOUT A PROPHECY? IF BREZZIK WEREN'T ALREADY DEAD AND UNOFFICIALLY OUT OF MY RANGE, I'LL TAKE IT OUT ON HIS BLOODLINE! THE ENTIRE SHOOTERBERG CLAN IS OFFICIALLY UP FOR SPECIAL PUNISHMENT! THEY'LL PAY FOR ALL THE TIMES BREZZIK TOLD ME TO MATE WITH MYSELF FOR POINTING OUT HIS MISTAKES! GRRR!

SO YOU WERE ONE OF THE ANOMALOUS CASES OF IT? WHAT DID OUR PARENTS DO?

I WAS AN ANOMALOUS AND **ACCELERATED** CASE! THEY DIDN'T EXPECT THAT! WE MOVED OUT OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD 'D GROWN UP IN, TRYING TO FIND A DOCTOR WHO'D BOTHER TREATING IT



ROBOTS HAVE LOWER CLASSES AND DISEASES?

IT'S A LONG STORY, WHICH BRIAN TOLD US WHEN HE GOT HERE

WE HAVE FAINTLY MANUFACTURED AND PERMANENTLY LOWER CLASSES MORE OF A PROBLEM IN ANCIENT TIMES, WHERE WE WERE ORANGE PLATING WERE PRIVILEGED OVER ONES IN BLUE PLATING, DESPITE BEING OTHERWISE IDENTICAL.

IT IS NOT SOMETHING WE ARE PROUD OF TODAY, DESPITE A FEW ATAVISMS WHO ARE.

YOU KNEW HER THEN? AND I GUESS THIS IS HOW MAX LEARNED ABOUT THE HOLY DOCTORS?

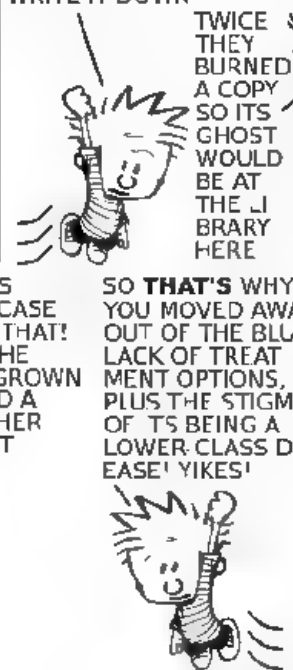
NO, I ONLY HEARD ABOUT HER FROM MAX AFTER I DIED. WE DID END UP IN THE SAME PLACE, BUT NOT AT THE SAME TIME AS FOR THE HOLY DOCTORS, YES



BACK AMONG THE GHOSTS, AGAIN

THAT'S A LONG AND COMPLICATED PROPHECY! AT LEAST THEY LET YOU WRITE IT DOWN!

TWICE THEY BURNED A COPY SO ITS GHOST WOULD BE AT THE LIBRARY HERE



SO THAT'S WHY YOU MOVED AWAY OUT OF THE BLUE LACK OF TREATMENT OPTIONS, PLUS THE STIGMA OF IT BEING A LOWER-CLASS DISEASE! YIKES!

I "STARTED LOSING" YOU JUST BEFORE MY DEAL WITH THE SNOW DEMONS ON MARCH FOURTEENTH OF THAT REALLY COLD YEAR?

I CAME DOWN WITH ARJENFLORB SYNDROME ON THE THIRTEENTH!

AND MY CLIENT'S MATE WITH IT, FROM MY SECOND JOB, SHOWED ME EXACTLY HOW THE SYNDROME PROGRESSES AT NORMAL SPEED, WHICH IS BAD ENOUGH!

IT IS A SHAME THAT ARJENFLORB UNJUSTLY GET SORTED BY CLASS.



ARJENFLORB SYNDROME IS ONE OF THE SYSTEMIC DISEASES. INABILITY TO KEEP FOOD DOWN, LIMB WEAKNESS, BAD BALANCE, DISRUPTED SLEEP SCHEDULE. A LOT OF DIFFERENT THINGS ARE AFFECTED.

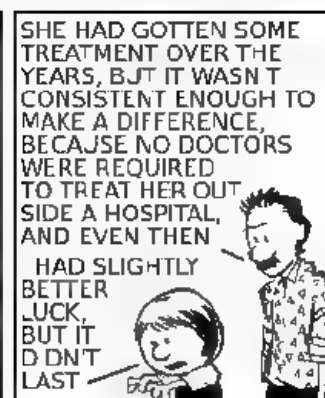
I'VE HEARD YOU CAN KEEP IT UNDER CONTROL FOR AWHILE IF YOU DO THINGS RIGHT.

THE SONG MOSTLY DOES THEM JUSTICE, BUT MISSES A FEW DETAILS. THEY'D EFFECTIVELY TORTURE THEIR NON-RICH PATIENTS WHEN THEY DIDN'T LEAVE THEM TO DIE. MY CLIENT'S MATE HAD BEEN THROUGH A LONG LOOP OF "I'M NOT GOING TO TREAT YOU" PROGRESSING TO "I'M NOT GOING TO TREAT YOU. IT'D BE TOO MUCH WORK SINCE YOU'VE GONE UNTREATED SO LONG."

ONLY IF YOU AREN'T TOO POOR TO AFFORD WHAT YOU NEED TO KEEP IT UNDER CONTROL, AND YOU DON'T HAVE CERTAIN ALLERGIES THAT GET IN THE WAY OF THAT. MY CLIENT'S MATE WON THE BAD LUCK LOTTERY FOR BOTH.

GOT SOME SYMPATHY FOR BEING A KID SHE DIDN'T.

SHE HAD GOTTEN SOME TREATMENT OVER THE YEARS, BUT IT WASN'T CONSISTENT ENOUGH TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, BECAUSE NO DOCTORS WERE REQUIRED TO TREAT HER OUTSIDE A HOSPITAL, AND EVEN THEN HAD SLIGHTLY BETTER LUCK, BUT IT DIDN'T LAST.





WHY IS SHE SO IMPORTANT, WHEN SHE WAS JUST THE SIGNIFICANT OTHER OF ONE OF YOUR CLIENTS? NOT THAT SHE DESERVED TO GO THROUGH ALL THAT!



I COULD HAVE GONE THROUGH THE SAME THING IF I HADN'T GOTTEN THE ACCELERATED VERSION OF THE SYNDROME! AND SO COULD YOU, IF YOU'D CAUGHT IT, CALVIN!

EXACTLY. IT WAS WHAT SHOWED ME HOW BAD THE SYSTEMS SET UP BY THE CHICKEN REALLY WERE.



SHE'D GONE THROUGH SO MANY DOCTORS THAT SHE'D HAD TO DEAL WITH THE BIG FOUR PERSONALLY. I WASN'T A DIRECT WITNESS TO IT ALL, BUT WHAT I DID SEE WAS MORE THAN ENOUGH. IT WAS MUCH LIKE MY EXPERIENCE IN THE FIRST LIBERTY TOWN, OR WHAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IF I HADN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET OUT AND FIND ANOTHER



WHAT WERE THE FOUR LIKE?

LIKE ANYONE WITH TOO MUCH POWER AND TOO LITTLE FEAR OF WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THEY MISJUDGED IT, WHETHER MORTAL, DEMIGOD, OR ANYTHING ELSE.



MY CLIENT TOLD ME THE SHORT VERSION OF WHAT SHE'D BEEN THROUGH ALREADY. ONE OF THE FOUR SAID, "IF YOU LOOK AT THE WRONG THING, I'M NOT GOING TO TREAT YOU." SHE TRIED TO QUALIFY AS DISABLED WITH ANOTHER OF THE FOUR, WHO SAID, "I'M NOT GOING TO SIGN A PIECE OF PAPER TO HELP SOMEONE GET ON **DISABILITY**." THE THIRD THREW AN HOURLONG TANTRUM ABOUT HOW SHE NEEDED TO ALWAYS TAKE HER MEDICATION ON TIME (DESPITE HER DISRUPTED SLEEP SCHEDULE), FILLED THE PRESCRIPTION FOR HER MEDICATION EXACTLY ONCE, AND BLEW HER OFF WHEN SHE TRIED TO GET IT REFILLED. THE FOURTH WAS THE ONE IN THE HOSPITAL WHEN SHE GOT BAD ENOUGH THAT SHE HAD TO GO THERE, WHERE HE **HAD** TO TREAT HER.



DID THAT WORK OUT ANY BETTER?

NO. THE HOSPITALS HAD A TIME LIMIT ON HOW LONG YOU COULD STAY THERE, AND THEN YOU'D GET THROWN OUT WHETHER YOU WERE HEALED OR NOT.



HOW RIDICULOUS!

IT'S WORSE THAN RIDICULOUS, IT'S EITHER NEGLECTFUL OR MALICIOUS. HE TOLD HER SHE NEEDED A SPECIAL DIET TO KEEP THE SYNDROME UNDER CONTROL, BUT COULDN'T BE BOTHERED TO TELL HER WHAT IT WAS, AND THEN TWISTED EVERYTHING SHE AND MY CLIENT SAID INTO AN EXCUSE TO GET RID OF HER. EVEN BEFORE THAT, HE HAD IT IN FOR HER.



SO HE COULD BE FORCED TO DO HIS SUPPOSED JOB, BUT NOT FORCED TO ACTUALLY DO IT WELL?

EXACTLY. THE HOSPITAL HAD PHYSICAL THERAPISTS WHO WERE SUPPOSED TO HELP HER REGAIN SOME STRENGTH IN HER WEAKENED LIMBS, BUT WHEN SHE WAS PHYSICALLY UNABLE TO DO SOME OF THE EXERCISES, THEY SAID IT WAS JUST "FEAR" ON HER PART AND WROTE ON HER PAPERWORK THAT SHE "REFUSED" TO DO THEM, AND THE SO-CALLED DOCTOR WENT ALONG WITH THAT AS AN EXCUSE TO THROW HER OUT FASTER.



WHAT HAPPENED TO HER AFTER THAT?



SHE WAS WORRIED ABOUT HAVING HER INABILITY TO KEEP FOOD DOWN COME BACK, AND NEITHER SHE NOR MY CLIENT HAD REBELLED ENOUGH AGAINST THE CHICKEN TO GET THE PRIVILEGES I DID, SO THEY WERE IN BAD HOUSING WHERE SHE WAS LIKELY TO HAVE A HEALTH CRISIS AGAIN SOON. THE SO-CALLED DOCTOR DISMISSED IT AS "SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND NON-SENSE PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES," THREW A FIT, AND STOMPED OUT LIKE A PETULANT TODDLER. I WAS A DIRECT WITNESS TO IT ALL. AND YES, HER SYMPTOMS **DID** COME BACK, BUT SHE ENDED UP RIGHT BACK THERE IN FRONT OF HIM, SO



THEY DIDN'T REBEL ENOUGH? THAT ACTUALLY MADE A DIFFERENCE?

RIGHT. MY BANDMATES AND I HAD GOTTEN A LOT OF TIME, BUT NEITHER OF THEM HAD ANGERED THE CHICKEN'S AUTHORITIES QUITE ENOUGH FOR THAT. MOST OF THEIR REBELLION WAS ON THE RELIGIOUS FRONT. REGARDING THAT, HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF TIGHMANISM?



MY COUSIN MENTIONED IT ONCE AS AN EXAMPLE OF A BAD RELIGION BECAUSE ITS FOUNDER WAS A MORTAL WOMAN WHO DIDN'T KNOW HER PLACE. DESPITE MY COUSIN'S BEING A WOMAN TOO.



I GUESS? SHE **DID** SAY THEY WERE CRAZY! I REMEMBER THAT MUCH!

SUPPOSE SHE ALSO SAID THAT JILL TIGHMAN'S BURNING TO DEATH IN A MEANINGLESS ACCIDENT WAS HER GETTING WHAT SHE DESERVED? AS OPPOSED TO THE TIGHMANITE VIEW THAT LIFE DOESN'T NEED MEANING, WE SHOULD TAKE JOY IN ITS MEANINGLESSNESS, AND HER DEATH WAS A FULFILLMENT OF THAT?



IT SOUNDS FAMILIAR. WHAT ELSE IS IT KNOWN FOR?

SO IT DOESN'T HAVE THAT PLETHORA COUNCIL YOU TALKED ABOUT WITH BRIAN, AND IT OVERLAPS WITH DISCORDIANISM?

LET'S SEE. DON'T DO ANYTHING JUST FOR CONFORMITY OR VANITY'S SAKE. THE ONLY UNIVERSAL THING IS OVERKILL. THE UNIVERSE IS THE DIVINE MADNESS AND ALL GODS ARE FRAGMENTS OF IT.

IT'S THE **PLEROMA** COUNCIL, AND IT ONLY OVERLAPS WITH DISCORDIANISM IN SOME ABSURDIST VIEWS.



IF IT DOESN'T HAVE THE PLETHORA COUNCIL, WHICH YOU KNOW IS HERE, IS IT EVEN FROM THIS REALITY?

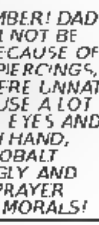


GOOD QUESTION! IT ISN'T HUMAN REFUGES FROM ANOTHER REALITY BROUGHT IT HERE TO ONE OF THE LIBERTY TOWNS.

MAX, IT SPREAD TO SEVERAL OTHER LIBERTY TOWNS FROM THERE AND GAINED CONVERTS CALVIN. WAIT. ARE THEY THE ONES WHO SAY "THE DIVINE MADNESS DOES WHAT IT WILL," AND DON'T PRAY?

MAX, EXACTLY! "DOES A TIGHMANITE PRAY?" IS FOR OBVIOUS NO QUESTIONS.

CALVIN, NOW I REMEMBER! DAD RANTED ABOUT THEIR NOT BEING CONSERVATIVE BECAUSE OF THEIR TATTOOS AND PIERCINGS, COMPLAINED THEY WERE UNNATURAL MUTANTS BECAUSE A LOT OF THEM HAD PURPLE EYES AND SIX FINGERS ON EACH HAND, COMPLAINED THEIR COBALT BLUE ROBES WERE UGLY AND SAID THEIR LACK OF PRAYER MEANT THEY HAD NO MORALS!





I ALSO REMEMBER BECAUSE HE SAID THERE WAS NO POINT IN HAVING A GOD UNLESS YOU COULD CURRY FAVOR WITH HIM AND MAKE HIM DO WHAT YOU WANTED. THE PROBLEM WAS AN ATHEIST HAD GOTTEN ON TV A FEW WEEKS BEFORE AND SAID THE EXACT SAME THING, AND HE'D RANTED THEN ABOUT HOW THE ATHEIST WAS COMPLETELY WRONG. I POINTED THAT OUT, AND HE DID THE "IT'S NOT THE SAME THING!" BIT AND GROUNDED ME FOR A WEEK FOR CONTRADICTING HIM.

SINCE WHEN DO ATHEISTS GET ON TV?



DAD SOMETIMES LIKES TO WATCH THE "NON CONSERVATIVE VIEWS AND WHY THEY'RE WRONG" SHOW SO HE CAN FEEL VINDICATED.



BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY, IF HE'S SO SURE OF HIS VIEWS, HE NEEDS TO HAVE THEM CONSTANTLY REINFORCED.

NEITHER DO I

THE TIGHMANITES HAVE A FAIR AMOUNT OF LITERATURE ABOUT PEOPLE WHO HAVE GODS ONLY TO TREAT THEM LIKE SLAVES WHILE



CALLING THEM FRIENDS. ODDLY ENOUGH AND IF MY BROTHER THINKS THE TIGHMANITES ARE MUTANTS, HE SHOULD TAKE A LOOK AT THE LAUWINISTS SOMETIME!

LAO SOMETHINGS? ARE THEY ANOTHER GROUP OF HUMANS FROM ANOTHER REALITY? HOW MANY REFUGEES FROM OTHER REALITIES ARE THERE?



MORE THAN YOU KNOW, AND IT'S TOO LONG OF A STORY TO TELL HERE AND NOW TO GET BACK TO



THE SO-CALLED DOCTOR BUSINESS, MY CLIENT WAS A CONVERT TO TIGHMANISM, AND HIS MATE WAS A MALCHICKENIST

CALVIN WHAT'S THAT?

MAX MALCHICKENISM IS THE BELIEF THAT THE CHICKEN IS THE ONE GOD, BUT HE'S AN EVIL SLAVEOWNER AND NOT WORTHY OF WORSHIP BOTH HIS BELIEFS AND HER'S OFFENDED THE DOCTORS WHO WERE GOOD CHICKENISTS (OR PRETENDING TO BE AT THE TIME), BUT WEREN'T OF FENSIVE ENOUGH TO GAIN THEM ANY REAL POINTS IN THE LOCAL LIBERTY TOWN.

SARANNA AND LIKE ALL LIBERTY TOWNS IT ONLY EXISTS BECAUSE THE CHICKEN PERMITS IT REGARDLESS OF HOW FREE THEIR RESIDENTS THINK THEY ARE MAX IT'S IRONIC YES

ANYWAY, AFTER THE DOCTOR LIED THAT HER CONCERNS WERE ALL IN HER HEAD AND LEFT THE NURSES SAID HE WAS JUST



"TELLING IT LIKE IT IS" THE SONG DOESN'T MENTION THAT THE BIG FOUR HAD ALL THEIR NURSES LICKING THEIR BOOTS AND THEN SHE ENDED UP IN THE WORST PLACE OF ALL.

HOW COULD THINGS GET WORSE? I GUESS THE SONG LEFT EVEN MORE OUT?



EXACTLY HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THE AHM, JOKE ABOUT WHY THE BUTT VICEROY IS CALLED THE OLD TRINITY?



NO...

MAX BECAUSE THE NEW TRINITY IS INSURANCE, DOCTORS, AND REHAB/NURSING HOMES' INSURANCE SAYS NO TO EVERYTHING WITHOUT SEEING YOU PERSONALLY, DOCTORS SAY NO TO EVERYTHING WHILE SEEING YOU PERSONALLY, AND REHAB/NURSING HOMES SAY NO TO EVERYTHING WHILE KEEPING YOU PERSONALLY LOCKED UP THE LAST IS WHERE SHE ENDED UP CALVIN WHY IS INSURANCE IMPORTANT?

MAX ONLY THE CHICKEN KNOWS!

MY CLIENT OBJECTED TO THE DOCTOR'S BEHAVIOR, BUT HE COULDN'T OBJECT TOO STRONGLY, OR HE'D BE KICKED OUT OF THE HOSPITAL FOR AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR.



AFTER THE SO CALLED DOCTOR WAS AGGRESSIVE ENOUGH TO THROW A FIT OVER HAVING TO KEEP DOING WHAT HE WAS PAID TO DO?



RIGHT. IF HE'D CHALLENGED THAT AGGRESSION TOWARDS DOING HIS JOB HIS PATIENTS WOULD BE



MUCH BETTER OFF, BUT YOU COULD SAY THAT ABOUT ALL THE BIG FOUR ONLY THE CHICKEN COULD FORCE THEM TO DO WELL, AND HE WOULDN'T DO THAT FOR NON-RICH OR HERETICS

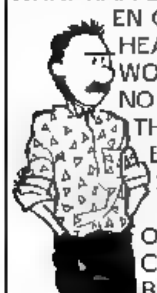
SARANNA WHAT ABOUT DOCTORS BELOW THE BIG FOUR? WAS THERE ANY WAY TO MAKE THEM DO THEIR JOBS OR TO REMOVE THEM IF YOU COULDN'T?

MAX YOU COULD REMOVE ONE IF A NURSE OF THEIRS DEVELOPED A CONSCIENCE AND TURNED THEM IN, BUT THAT WAS SO RARE IT MIGHT AS WELL HAVE BEEN WINNING THE LOTTERY MY CLIENT'S MATE DID HAVE A FEW GOOD ONES HELPING HER WITH SOME PARTS OF ARJENFLORB, BUT IT DIDN'T AMOUNT TO MUCH WITH ONE OF THE BIG FOUR AROUND TO OVERRIDE THEM. AND THE REHAB/NURSING HOME DIDN'T HELP AT ALL.

IS THIS WHERE THE TORTURE PART COMES IN? ASIDE FROM THE HOURLONG TANTRUM DOCTOR WHO FILLED HER PRESCRIPTION ONCE AND NEVER AGAIN, WHO WAS BASICALLY TWISTING THE KNIFE?

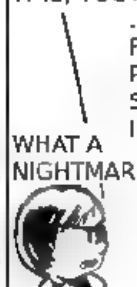


YES, WHICH IS WHY I'LL BE CUTTING THIS PART SHORT. YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EVEN ORDINARY



HEALTH CARE WORKERS HAVE NO ONE HOLDING THEM BACK ESPECIALLY WHEN SOME OF THEM HAD FLUNKED OUT OF CHILD CARE POSITIONS BEFOREHAND

DID YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH ANYTHING LIKE THIS, TOO?



...YES, BUT NOT FOR LONG MY PART IN THIS STORY'S COMING RIGHT UP.

WHAT A NIGHTMARE!

INDEED THE FACILITY HAD TO HAVE A DOCTOR IN CHARGE, AND IT'S FUNNY THAT YOU BRING UP THAT



MEMBER OF THE BIG FOUR SHE WAS THE ONE.

LIKE THAT ISN'T OMINOUS!

IT WASN'T THAT BAD AT FIRST. SHE HAD BETTER RESULTS WITH THE PHYSICAL THERAPY THERE, AND SHE'D HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GO HOME AND GET THERAPY IF SHE HAD MY CLIENT'S MATE. AND MY CLIENT COULD GET INTO DISABLED FRIENDLY HOUSING FIRST. OR AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT THE DOCTOR SAID. MAKE OF THAT WHAT YOU WILL.



THERE WAS A BROUHAHA WITH TRYING TO GET THE FACILITY TO ACTUALLY PROVIDE A LIST OF THE MEDICATIONS THEY WERE GIVING MY CLIENT'S MATE. THAT WAS A SIGN OF THINGS TO COME. FIRST, PHYSICAL THERAPY WAS KEEPING HER STRONGER UP, BUT HER INSURANCE DECIDED SHE WASN'T PROGRESSING FAST ENOUGH.



THEY HAD AS MUCH CARE FOR KEEPING THE PLAGUE OUT AS THEY DID FOR HELPING THEIR PATIENTS IN GENERAL.



AT LEAST DOCTORS AND INSURANCE HAVE TO KEEP UP THE APPEARANCE OF DOING SOMETHING!

YES, EVEN THOUGH A LOT OF THEM HATE IT.



MY CLIENT FLEW ME IN ON WHAT HAPPENED. AT THAT POINT, THE ARJENFLORB SYNDROME HAD WEAKENED HIS MATE'S ARMS SIGNIFICANTLY, WHICH WAS A BAD SIGN ON TOP OF THE PLAGUE, BUT SHE TOLD HIM SHE'D CONTACT HIM WHEN IT WAS SAFE TO COME BACK. A WEEK AND A HALF LATER, HE GOT A PHONE CALL.



SO IT'S LIKE THAT MOVIE I OVERHEARD MOM WATCHING BEHIND DAD'S BACK ONCE, ABOUT THE DEAD GUY BROUGHT BACK BY A BIRD TO AVENGE BOTH HIS AND HIS GIRLFRIEND'S DEATH? OR AT LEAST THE ONE PART NEAR THE END?

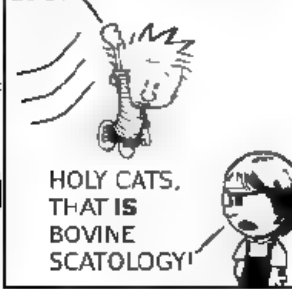
FROM WHAT YOU'VE POINTED OUT, IT WAS PROBABLY A WAY TO TWIST THE KNIFE AGAIN. HOW LONG WERE THE TANTRUMS SHE THREW THIS TIME?



SO THEY CUT HER OFF SO SHE COULDN'T PROGRESS AT ALL ANYMORE? YIKES!



AS GRANDMA SAID THE LAST TIME SHE VISITED, THAT'S BOVINE SCATOLOGY!



HOLY CATS, THAT IS BOVINE SCATOLOGY!

GIVEN YOUR EXPRESSION, I'M GUESSING SOMETHING ELSE WENT WRONG? I DON'T EVEN KNOW THIS PERSON, BUT IF MY SISTER HAD TO GO THROUGH A FASTER VERSION OF WHAT SHE DID, SHE HAS MY SYMPATHY!



"I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU. DON'T WANT IT ANYMORE. THIRTY HOURS OF PAIN, ALL AT ONCE."

ACTUALLY, SHE DIDN'T THROW ANY THIS TIME, AND SEEMED TO BE IN A BETTER MOOD OF COURSE. SHE WAS ONLY AT THE FACILITY EVERY FEW WEEKS, AND IT'D BEEN A FEW YEARS SINCE SHE'D HAD MY CLIENT'S MATE AS A PATIENT, SO SHE LIKELY FORGOT SOME THINGS.



YES, AND HER MEDICATIONS DIDN'T HELP HER THAT MUCH. SHE WAS EITHER PASSING OUT RANDOMLY OR STILL UNABLE TO KEEP FOOD DOWN, EVEN THOUGH THE MEDICATIONS WERE SUPPOSED TO FIX THAT.



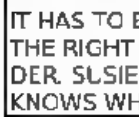
SOMEONE ELSE HAD TO FILL IN FOR ME THAT WEEK, AS I'D SHUFFLED MY SCHEDULE AROUND FOR THE MISSION TO RESCUE THE MAGUS AND THE OTHER REFUGEES. THAT TIME IS WHEN EVERYTHING REALLY FELL APART.



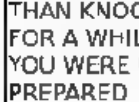
BUT WHY THIS STORY FIRST? IT HASN'T TAKEN AS LONG AS THE KRALTAR STORY, AND IT'S INTERESTING IN A COMPLETELY HORRIFYING WAY.



IT HAS TO BE IN THE RIGHT ORDER. SUSIE KNOWS WHY.



PRETTY MUCH, EXCEPT FOR THE AMOUNT OF TIME MY CLIENT'S MATE SUFFERED FOR MONTHS, WHILE SUSIE'S ACCELERATED SYNDROME MEANT SHE ONLY SUFFERED FOR WEEKS. TAKING WEEKS ALL AT ONCE WOULD DO MUCH WORSE THAN KNOCK YOU OUT FOR A WHILE. IF YOU WERE UNPREPARED.



WHAT'S THAT SAYING? THE AXE FORGETS, BUT THE TREE REMEMBERS? AND WAS YOUR CLIENT'S MATE SUPPOSED TO BE GRATEFUL THAT SHE WAS IN A GOOD ENOUGH MOOD TO ACT LIKE A PROFESSIONAL?

YES, AND APPARENTLY SO.



SOUNDS LIKE THE HOSPITAL, IN THAT THEY DIDN'T CARE IF SHE GOT BETTER AS LONG AS THEY GOT PAID.

EXACTLY AND THEN THERE WAS THE PLAGUE OUTBREAK THAT SPREAD UNCHECKED!



WHAT?!

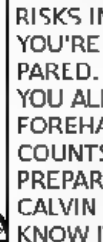


MAX, MY CLIENT WAS VISITING HIS MATE IN THE FACILITY ONCE A WEEK IN ORDER TO KEEP THEIR HOUSING, BUT THE ISSUES CAUSED BY THE SUPPOSED TREATMENTS THEY WERE GIVING HER THREW THAT SCHEDULE OFF. THEY'D HAD NO LUCK FINDING DISABLED-FRIENDLY HOUSING BUT BEING UNDERPRIVILEGED IN A LIBERTY TOWN VIRTUALLY ENSURED THAT AFTER NOT HEARING FROM HER FOR LONG ENOUGH, HE VISITED ANYWAY. FUNNY HOW HE GOT A MASK AND GOWN TO KEEP FROM CATCHING THE PLAGUE, BUT SHE DIDN'T CALVIN. *SPEECHLESS*

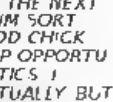
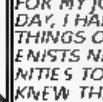
SARANNA: DARE I ASK HOW THIS ENDS?

MAX: NOT WELL.

SOMETHING I'VE LEARNED FROM THE LIBRARIES HERE IS THAT IDENTICAL TWINS CAN SHARE MEMORIES. BUT IT'S INSTANTANEOUS, AND THERE ARE MAJOR RISKS INVOLVED IF YOU'RE NOT PREPARED. TELLING YOU ALL THIS BEFOREHAND COUNTS AS BEING PREPARED, AND CALVIN NEEDS TO KNOW IT, TOO.



MAX: AS FOR DEATH, THAT'S WHAT THE PHONE CALL TO MY CLIENT WAS ABOUT. AN HOUR AFTER THE FACILITY'S USUAL CHECKUP OR SO THEY SAID. THEY FOUND HER UNRESPONSIVE AND ASKED HIM WHETHER THEY SHOULD TRY CPR. HE AGREED. THEY CALLED AGAIN. IN A BIT SAYING THEY COULDN'T REVIVE HER. SARANNA: AT LEAST SHE WASN'T SUFFERING ANYMORE. MAX: NOT SO FAST. THE CHICKEN'S SYSTEM WASN'T DONE WITH THEM YET. WHEN I SHOWED UP FOR MY JOB WITH HIM THE NEXT DAY, I HAD TO HELP HIM SORT THINGS OUT. BUT GOOD CHICKENISTS NEVER PASS UP OPPORTUNITIES TO HURT HERETICS. I KNEW THAT INTELLECTUALLY BUT SEEING IT WAS DIFFERENT.





SO THE CHICKEN'S MEDICAL SYSTEM, FROM DOCTORS TO INSURANCE TO REHAB/NURSING HOMES, IS DESIGNED TO MAKE SURE ONLY HIS PREFERRED PEOPLE GET GOOD HEALTH CARE WHENEVER POSSIBLE. I GET THAT, BUT WHAT IN THE NAME OF SAINT GULIK COULD THEY DO AFTER ALL THAT?

WHEN I TOOK MY CLIENT OVER TO THE REHAB/NURSING HOME FACILITY (AFTER THEY REMOVED HER BODY) IN ORDER TO GET HER THINGS, EXPECTED HIM TO BE IN SHOCK. HE WAS, BUT NOT FOR THE REASONS I

THOUGHT, ACCORDING TO HIM, ALL OF HER THINGS WERE IN THE EXACT SAME POSITIONS THAT THEY WERE IN A WEEK AND A HALF BEFORE, WHEN HE SAW HER LAST!

SHE SAID MY CLIENT'S MATE DIDN'T HAVE THE CONDITION THEN AGAIN, SHE WAS ONE OF THE BIG FOUR, SO CHOOSING BETWEEN "DO WORK AND STERILIZE THE HERETIC" AND "DO NOTHING AND LET THE HERETIC DIE WAS A NO BRAINER. THE SECOND

GIVEN THAT SHE ALSO SIGNED THE DEATH CERTIFICATE LATER, IT ALSO FITS MY CLIENT WAS POOR AND (I HATE TO USE THIS PHRASE, BUT IT APPLIES) VISIBLY DISABLED. HE'D NEVER BEEN ABLE TO COME OFF AS THREATENING IN HIS LIFE, MUCH LESS HIRE ANYONE TO MAKE THREATS FOR HIM WITHOUT PUTTING HIM AT RISK. THE IDEA OF HIS SUCCESSFULLY THREATENING THE CHICKENISTS WAS A JOKE.

THE SAME COULD APPLY TO HIS MATE. ALL THEY HAD WERE EACH OTHER. THE HOUSING THEY WERE IN HAD THE PAPERWORK IN HER NAME, BUT SHE'D SET THINGS UP SO THAT IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO HER, HE COULD KEEP ON LIVING THERE BUT THAT WEAK POINT WAS WHAT THE CHICKENISTS LEANED ON

THEY DID SOMETHING TO BREAK THAT?

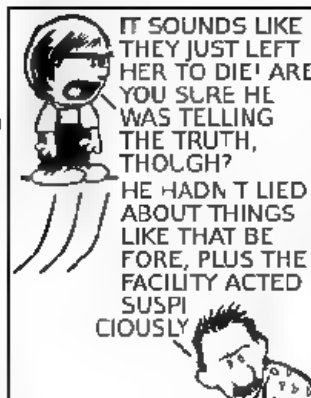
THEY HAD THE RULES CHANGED IN THE NAME OF "EFFICIENCY," SO HE NO LONGER QUALIFIED IF SHE WASN'T THERE

HE ONLY FOUND OUT SHORTLY AFTER SHE DIED, AND HE HAD NOWHERE TO GO, GIVEN THAT THEIR HOUSING SEARCH HAD BEEN FRUITLESS. I SHOWED UP READY TO DO MY JOB ONE DAY, AND HE WAS GONE. HE LEFT A NOTE SAYING HE WAS OFF TO JOIN A PROTEST, SO THE ANTI HERESY SQUAD GOT HIM



I'M NOT FAMILIAR WITH THAT SAINT

ERIS DISCORDIA'S MESSENGER, A.K.A. HERMES OR MERCURY. IT TURNS OUT HE ISN'T THE GOD OF FLOWERS AND BOUQUETS!



IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY JUST LEFT HER TO DIE! ARE YOU SURE HE WAS TELLING THE TRUTH, THOUGH?

HE HADN'T LIED ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT BEFORE, PLUS THE FACILITY ACTED SUSPICIOUSLY



SO WHAT HAPPENED NEXT? YOU SAID THE CHICKENISTS DID WORSE, BUT THEY HAVE NO AUTHORITY IN LIBERTY TOWNS YOU SAID!

UNFORTUNATELY, THEY CAN UNOFFICIALLY LEAN ON PEOPLE



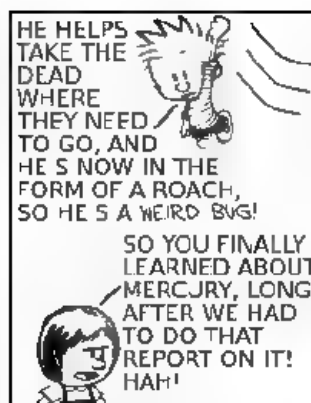
BUT THEY, AS THE SERVANTS OF THE AHM, ONE TRUE GOD, ALWAYS HAVE TO WIN, RIGHT?

RIGHT. IT'S A MATTER OF PRIDE FOR THEM, INHERITED FROM THE OLD TRINITY



THEY DID SOMETHING TO BREAK THAT?

THEY HAD THE RULES CHANGED IN THE NAME OF "EFFICIENCY," SO HE NO LONGER QUALIFIED IF SHE WASN'T THERE



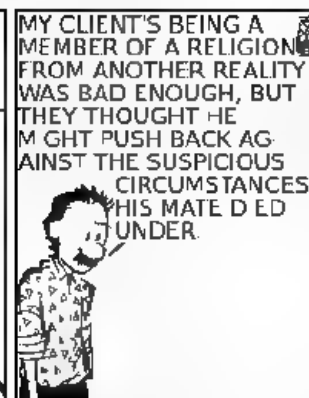
HE HELPS TAKE THE DEAD WHERE THEY NEED TO GO, AND HE'S NOW IN THE FORM OF A ROACH, SO HE'S A WEIRD BUG!

SO YOU FINALLY LEARNED ABOUT MERCURY, LONG AFTER WE HAD TO DO THAT REPORT ON IT! HAH!

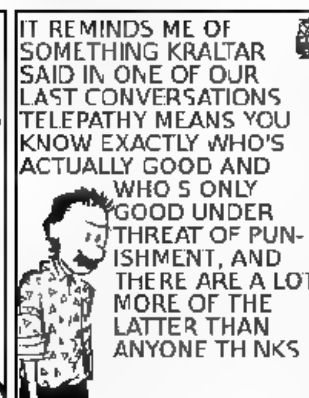


WHEN WE WENT TO GET HER DEATH CERTIFICATE FOR THE BUREAUCRACY, IT LISTED HER CAUSE OF DEATH AS "FAILURE TO THRIVE."

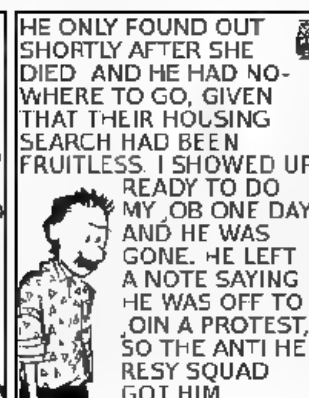
ANYONE WHO'D SEEN HER, AS I HAD WHEN TAKING MY CLIENT TO VISIT HER, COULD SEE IT WAS A COP OUT BECAUSE SHE WAS A HERETIC



MY CLIENT'S BEING A MEMBER OF A RELIGION FROM ANOTHER REALITY WAS BAD ENOUGH, BUT THEY THOUGHT HE MIGHT PUSH BACK AGAINST THE SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES HIS MATE DIED UNDER



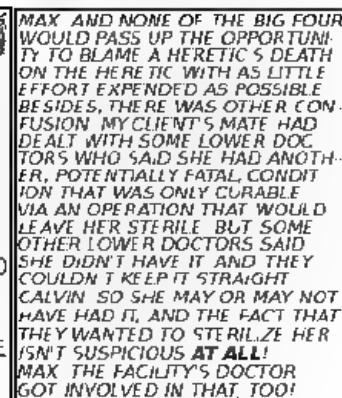
IT REMINDS ME OF SOMETHING KRALTAR SAID IN ONE OF OUR LAST CONVERSATIONS. TELEPATHY MEANS YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHO'S ACTUALLY GOOD AND WHO'S ONLY GOOD UNDER THREAT OF PUNISHMENT, AND THERE ARE A LOT MORE OF THE LATTER THAN ANYONE THINKS



HE ONLY FOUND OUT SHORTLY AFTER SHE DIED, AND HE HAD NOWHERE TO GO, GIVEN THAT THEIR HOUSING SEARCH HAD BEEN FRUITLESS. I SHOWED UP READY TO DO MY JOB ONE DAY, AND HE WAS GONE. HE LEFT A NOTE SAYING HE WAS OFF TO JOIN A PROTEST, SO THE ANTI HERESY SQUAD GOT HIM

IT'S STILL GOOD TO FILL IN THE GAPS IN MY KNOWLEDGE, AND WITH SOMETHING NON-CHICKEN-RELATED

THERE'S ALSO SAINT LAUWIN, THE FOUNDER AND CLONE SEED OF THE LAUWINISTS, BUT LET ME WRAP UP THIS SORDID TALE



MAX AND NONE OF THE BIG FOUR WOULD PASS UP THE OPPORTUNITY TO BLAME A HERETIC'S DEATH ON THE HERETIC WITH AS LITTLE EFFORT EXPENDED AS POSSIBLE. BESIDES, THERE WAS OTHER CONFUSION. MY CLIENT'S MATE HAD DEALT WITH SOME LOWER DOCTORS WHO SAID SHE HAD ANOTHER, POTENTIALLY FATAL CONDITION THAT WAS ONLY CURABLE VIA AN OPERATION THAT WOULD LEAVE HER STERILE. BUT SOME OTHER LOWER DOCTORS SAID SHE DIDN'T HAVE IT AND THEY COULDN'T KEEP IT STRAIGHT CALVIN. SO SHE MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE HAD IT, AND THE FACT THAT THEY WANTED TO STERILIZE HER ISN'T SUSPICIOUS AT ALL! MAX, THE FACILITY'S DOCTOR GOT INVOLVED IN THAT, TOO!



THAT WOULD TAKE A LOT OF MONEY, BUT THE CHICKEN FAVORS THE RICH, SO HE WOULDN'T BE IN ANY POSITION TO DO SO. IT'S AN EXCUSE TO TARGET HIM, TOO!



NOW YOU'RE GETTING IT!



HOW DOES IT REMIND YOU, THOUGH?

MY CLIENT'S BEING NON-THREATENING MEANT EVERYONE TREATED HIM HOW THEY REALLY WANTED TO, AND DIDN'T BOTHER HOLDING BACK. SO TELEPATHY ISN'T REQUIRED TO UNDERSTAND IT IF THAT'S YOUR SITUATION.

SARANNA: THEY KILLED HIM? MAX: YES. THE REST OF THE NOTE THANKED ME FOR STAYING BY HIS SIDE FOR AWHILE. EVEN THOUGH IT WAS MY JOB, AND SAID THAT IF THE CHICKEN WAS HOLDING HER SOUL HOSTAGE, HE WOULD FIND SOME WAY TO BREAK HER OUT, AND THEN HE'D TRY TO TALK HER INTO FINDING AN AFTERLIFE SOMEWHERE TOGETHER THAT WASN'T SO CRUEL AS THE LIVES THEY'D BEEN FORCED TO LEAD IN THIS WORLD. CALVIN: WHAT IF SHE REINCARNATED FIRST? MAX: THAT WOULDN'T HAPPEN IN THE SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME BETWEEN THEIR DEATHS, AND HE MAY HAVE FOUND HIS OWN WAY TO LIBERATE THEM BOTH. I DON'T KNOW FOR CERTAIN

THAT WAS THE FIRST STEP. IT TURNED OUT, THAT LED TO MY DEATH AS I TOLD KRALTAR, I WAS WORRIED THAT YOU, CALVIN, WOULD BE CONSIDERED A HERETIC AND END UP DESTROYED

AT EVERY TURN BY THE CHICKEN'S SYSTEM AND WHAT CONVINCED ME OF IT WAS MY REPLACEMENT CLIENT

ALSO, LOOKING BACK, I PANICKED BUT I'D JUST SEEN THE CHICKEN'S FULL SYSTEM IN ACTION THAT'S WHY I TOLD YOU THAT STORY IN GRM DETAIL YOU NEED TO KNOW WHAT

YOU'RE GOING TO BE FIGHTING AGAINST IN FULL, REGARDLESS OF ANY PROPHECY

ALSO, THE RATES OF DISEASES LIKE ARJENFLORB SYNDROME HAVE GONE WAY DOWN, SO THERE ISN'T MUCH BEGGING!

WHERE'D YOU HEAR THAT THEY WENT DOWN? AND HAVE YOU USED YOUR EYE TO CHECK?

AND HERE I WAS, THINKING THAT SOMETHING WAS GOING RIGHT AND NOT CHECKING IT OUT!

SINCE YOU'VE BEEN LOCKED IN A DUNGEON FOR A LONG TIME, I CAN'T BLAME YOU FOR THAT

TO GET ENOUGH POWER TO TURN THE OLD TRINITY INTO HIS BUTT VICEROY, THE CHICKEN DRAINED SOME SPIRITUAL ENERGY FROM THIS REALITY TO KEEP IT OUT OF THE TRINITY'S HANDS. NOT ENOUGH TO

BREAK IT LIKE BRIAN'S ORIGINAL REALITY, BUT ENOUGH TO BREAK THE TIMELINE HERE SOME OF THE FUTURE BECAME THE PRESENT

WHAT, WAS SUSIE THE ONE?

NO, BUT I HAD ANOTHER CLIENT WHO ENDED UP IN THE SAME FACILITY THAT MY FORMER CLIENT'S MATE DID

HOW COULD PEOPLE HAVE LET THINGS GET SO BAD? AND WITH THE CHICKEN GONE, WHO'S GOING TO MAKE SURE HIS REPLACEMENT ISN'T THE SAME?

ALL THE REPORTED STATISTICS I COULD FIND SAY THE RATES STARTED GOING DOWN AFTER QUADPOOP DAY HAPPENED AND WAS MADE A NATIONAL HOLIDAY. I SHOULD CHECK. AAIIEE!

IF HE WANTS EVERYONE TO WORK SO BADLY, WHY DOESN'T HE HELP TREAT THOSE DISEASES, OR AT LEAST KEEP THEM UNDER CONTROL? THEY COULD WORK WITH THE RIGHT HELP! WHY KILL THEM INSTEAD?

MAX THERE WAS OTHER DAMAGE THAT THE ONE TIME WARDENS WERE ABLE TO FIX, BUT THAT'S ANOTHER REASON WHY THE ONE HATE THE CHICKEN SO MUCH. TIFFANY RANTED ABOUT IT ONCE CALVIN THAT EXPLAINS SO MUCH

THIS EASY LISTENING MUZAK REALLY OFFENDS MOM AND DAD WAIT, WHY AM I NOT PLAYING SPEED-CORE DUB-STEP MUSIC INSTEAD?

I WAS LEERY ENOUGH I WAS ALSO FEELING A BIT GUILTY ABOUT HOW I WAS FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE MAGICALLY HEALED FROM A POTENTIALLY FATAL WOUND JUST BECAUSE I'D MADE THE RIGHT FRIENDS, WHILE THESE PEOPLE HAD NO SUCH LUCK.

IN ORDER I DON'T KNOW, AND THE PLE-ROMA COUNCIL HAS SOME PLANS TO AVOID IT, SINCE MOST OF THE MEMBERS HAVE BEEN OPPRESSED BY THE CHICKEN AND/OR HIS AGENTS THEMSELVES

LEAVING ASIDE THE HOLIDAY COMMEMORATING THE BIG FOUR'S BEING TURNED INTO POOP GHOSTS FOR THEIR CRIMES, WHICH MANY CAN APPRECIATE, YOU NOW SEE THAT THE CRIMES NEVER STOPPED? THAT THEY WERE JUST COVERED UP BETTER?

TIME SPENT HAVING THOSE CONDITIONS TREATED OR KEPT UNDER CONTROL IS TIME NOT SPENT WORKING. THE CHICKEN OBJECTED TO HIS UNDERLINGS' MASS MURDER UNTIL HE ENGAGED IN IT HIMSELF AFTER HE KILLED THEM. THEN HE CHANGED HIS MIND. ONE OF OUR ANCIENT BUILDERS HAD CEREBRAL PALSY, SO THE ODDS OF MY PEOPLE'S BEING BUILT IN YOUR REALITY ARE NOW NEGLIGIBLE.

RIGHT. THE FLYING SPAGHETTI MONSTER, THE KIND OF ADVANCED GENETIC ENGINEERING THAT CAN FIX SO MANY MORE MEDICAL PROBLEMS (IF YOU CAN AFFORD IT), SO MANY NEW MUSIC GENRES. THEY'RE ALL FROM YEARS IN THE FUTURE!

MAX BUT A FEW SESSIONS IN MY NEW CLIENT MENTIONED A KID BEING ADMITTED. WHICH I THOUGHT WAS ODD. IMAGINE MY SURPRISE WHEN I FOUND OUT IT WAS SUSIE, WHOM I'D SEEN SOME OF THE LAST TIME I VISITED CALVIN AND THE REST OF MY BROTHER'S FAMILY AND SHE HAD ARJENFLORB SYNDROME TOO! SUSIE MAX FIGURED THAT IF THE CHICKEN HAD TARGETED ME WITH ARJENFLORB SYNDROME WITH MY HERETIC SISTER YOU, CALVIN WOULD BE NEXT FOR BEING A POTENTIAL HERETIC YOURSELF MAX IT GOT TO THE POINT I COULDN'T SLEEP I HAD TO SEE FOR MYSELF HOW CALVIN WAS DOING REGARDLESS OF MY BROTHER'S LETTERS I HAD A PLAN

AT LEAST THINGS IMPROVED AFTER THE BIG FOUR TURNED ON THE CHICKEN! DROPPING THE "TREATING PATIENTS" ACT AND OPENLY KILLING THEM FOR MONEY AT LEAST LED TO THE NEW SYSTEM WHERE BEGGING THE CHICKEN FOR HELP CAN GET HIM TO SHOW MERCY! NOT THAT IT'S GOOD BUT IT'S A NET IMPROVEMENT FOR THOSE WHO NEED MERCY!

ARJENFLORB SYNDROME, ASTHMA, DIABETES, CEREBRAL PALSY ALL DISEASES THAT SIGNIFICANTLY CUT INTO PEOPLE'S ABILITY TO WORK! AND PEOPLE WITH THEM ARE NOW CALLED "USELESS EATERS" AND MASS KILLED IN SECRET EXCEPT FOR A FEW TOKEN CASES OF EACH! IS THERE NO END TO ALL THE SPILLED BLOOD?!

THERE'S ALSO GENETIC ENGINEERING THAT COULD TREAT MANY OF THEM, BUT THE CHICKEN PREFERS TO ONLY USE IT ON PEOPLE HE DEEMS WORTHY

WHEN WE CHANGED FROM THE OLD TRINITY TO THE CHICKEN, THAT WAS ONE OF MANY THINGS I SUDDENLY KNEW ABOUT WHEN I DIDN'T BEFORE! WHY'S THAT?

ADD IN THE STUFF FROM OTHER REALITIES WHERE THINGS ARE DIFFERENT ENOUGH, AND.

I PREFER TO CALL IT INFINITE POSSIBILITIES, THOUGH SOME CALL IT A Muddled MESS IT HELPS JS HERE.

MAX I NEEDED KRALTAR'S HELP WITH MY PLAN, SINCE FTL TRAVEL WAS THE ONLY WAY TO GET TO YOU FAST ENOUGH

SO YOU WANT TO USE THE SHIP ON AN UNOFFICIAL MISSION?

I KNOW IT SOUNDS BAD.



NEEDS MUST AS THE CHICKEN DRIVES. I UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF SAVING FAMILY WHEN IT IS REQUIRED, AS OPPOSED TO MERELY MAKING A SOCIAL CALL.

...THANK YOU



I WILL GO WITH YOU YOU HAVE BECOME A SKILLED PILOT, BUT TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE, AND WE HAVE DOWNTIME, SINCE THE LAST OFFICIAL SIDE MISSION WAS A BUST?

YES THAT'S THE RIGHT PHRASING. WHAT WENT WRONG?



IT TURNS OUT THAT "BRILLIANCE," THE ANTI HOLY WEAPON, IS NOT AS EASILY ACCESSIBLE AS WE THOUGHT, AND THE GOD BEHIND IT REFUSES TO HELP US

WHAT WAS HIS NAME? EARLED?



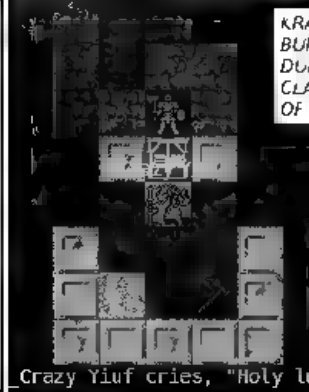
IT IS YREDELEMNUL, AND THE GOD HAS NO GENDER

RIGHT, LIKE SKIRRA GODS AREN'T LIMITED BY THAT, ESPECIALLY THOSE FROM OTHER REALITIES



THAT IS THE FIRST PROBLEM. YALDA BAAWK MAY CALL HIMSELF HOLY, BUT IS IT SO? AND OTHER REALITIES MAY DEFINE HOLINESS DIFFERENTLY

SO THE WEAPON MIGHT NOT WORK



KRALTAR IT'S ALSO BURIED DEEP IN A DUNGEON THAT HAS CLAIMED THE LIVES OF FAR TOO MANY

WHICH IS THE SECOND PROBLEM: TOO MUCH RISK I GET IT TOO BAD IT DIDN'T PAN OUT



Crazy Yif cries, "Holy lumber chicken!"

SPEAKING OF DUNGEONS, YOU SAID YOUR BROTHER AND HIS FAMILY LIVE PRACTICALLY ON TOP OF THE CHICKEN'S DUNGEON, YES?

YES



I'LL MAKE SURE THAT STEALTH MODE'S AT FULL POWER, THEN IT WILL TAKE TIME TO CHARGE. CAN YOU HOLD OUT FOR NINE DAYS?

THAT'S FINE



IT WILL ALSO TAKE THAT LONG TO INFORM THE OTHERS OF MY ABSENCE THIS TRIP MAY ALSO BE RELATED TO THE PROPHECY, I THINK POSSIBLY! I HOPE MY BROTHER BEHAVES



I'D CALL HIM "ARPHAXAD THE KIN-SLAYER" NOW, IF THAT NAME WASN'T TOTALLY METAL!

HUH!



HE CALLED UPON THE CHICKEN TO TURN MOM INTO A BUTT PERSON, SINCE SHE WAS RELUCTANT TO HAVE ME THROWN IN THE DUNGEON! WHAT DOES THAT ALSO MAKE HIM?



LET'S SEE ONE OF THE CHICKEN GOD'S BUTT RELATED TITLES IS THE ULTIMATE CALLIPYGIAN. THAT'S GREEK, SO CHICKEN TRANSFORMING BUTT IN GREEK ROOTS IS. POULTOMORPHOPYGIAN HE'S ONE OF THOSE BY PROXY

HOW DO YOU KNOW STUFF LIKE THAT?



I READ WHEN I GET BORED, AND I'VE DONE MORE OF IT SINCE I WAS THROWN IN THE DUNGEON BESIDES, FOCUSING ON STUFF LIKE THIS IS A DISTRACTION FROM THE STUFF WE JUST

LEARNED FROM MAX



DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING COOLER? LIKE SOME THING ELSE THAT WOULD OFFEND THE CHICKEN?

HEXADECIMAL IS BASE SIXTEEN, BUT IT'S A MIX OF LATIN AND GREEK. FULL LATIN WOULD MAKE IT SEXADECIMAL.



IT IS SIMILAR TO BASE THIRTY-SIX, WHICH IS CALLED HEXATRIGESIMAL BY SOME IN YOUR REALITY WHO KNOW OF IT, AND WHICH ALSO MIXES LATIN AND GREEK. A BAD PUN ABOUT BASE SIXTEEN THAT SOME OF MY PEOPLE MAKE IS "3740042371887387303."

YOUR "EVIL" PROCESSOR, RIGHT YOU CAN PUN TOO?



I WONDER HOW LONG IT TOOK YOU TO LEARN ROBOT SPEAK, SINCE IT PROBABLY INVOLVES A LOT OF MATH

A WHILE, BUT WE HAD A LOT OF TIME ON OUR HANDS

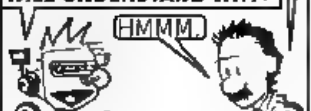


MAX AND BRIAN IS A GOOD TEACHER ESPECIALLY WHEN GIVEN ENOUGH TIME

WHAT DOES "2432449536195120293-1923003025819763950-3885865352531129577" SAY IN MY LANGUAGE?

I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA WHAT IT SAYS AT ALL

THAT IS HILARIOUS, AND WHEN YOU LEARN IT, YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHY!



AND I ALSO HAD TO DISTRACT MYSELF FROM BLOODY NEWS THE WAY I FOUND OUT ABOUT THE CHICKEN'S CONTINUING MASS MURDER AFTER HE TOOK DOWN THE BIG FOUR WAS RUNNING INTO A LOT MORE GHOSTS HERE, WHO WANTED TO ABANDON THIS CRUEL REALITY, AFTER DIED



BUT I'M GETTING AHEAD OF MYSELF AGAIN. IN THE NINE DAYS I HAD TO WAIT, I RAN INTO SUSIE'S PARENTS WHEN I TOOK MY NEW CLIENT TO THE FACILITY, AND THEY RECOGNIZED ME.



THEY MENTIONED OFFHAND THAT ALL THEIR ATTEMPTS TO GET THE CHICKEN TO SPARE AT LEAST ONE OF THEIR DAUGHTERS WERE FOR NAUGHT.

IT'S NOT AN IMPROMPTU VISIT HE REALLY DISLIKES THOSE, AND IT WOULD BE MORE SUSPICIOUS TO MAKE ONE I SENT HIM A LETTER A FEW DAYS AGO.

YOU KNOW HIM BEST I'LL STILL PUT ON MY HUMAN DISGUISE NOW, BEFORE YOU TURN ON FTL.



SPATIAL MATRIX HAS STABILIZED DISENGAGING FTL, ENTERING HOVER MODE

GOOD!



THE TELESCANNER DETECTS NO LIVING BEINGS WITH HOSTILE INTENT WE SHOULD BE SAFE

MOVING TO THE EDGE OF THE RAVINE ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE HOUSE



MAX, DO NOT MOVE THE SHIP HAS TAKEN DAMAGE, AND I WILL MAKE AN EMERGENCY LANDING WITH THE AUTOMATIC CONTROLS. THE MEDICAL ANALYZER WILL TELL ME HOW BADLY YOU'RE INJURED

UUHH...

FORGET MY DISGUISE. WE HAVE LOST THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE

AND THAT'S HOW HE FIRST FOUND OUT I EXISTED! THAT ONE CONVERSATION!

AND NOW THEY'VE LOST BOTH OF YOU!

EXACTLY!

THEY CARED ONLY FOR APPEARANCES! AND LOOK WHAT IT GOT THEM!



THE DAY BEFORE THE TRIP, THERE WAS TALK THAT SUSIE'D TAKEN A TURN FOR THE WORSE SHE WAS JUST A KID, AFTER ALL IT WORRIED ME MORE, BUT I HELD UP



IT WASN'T JUST TALK EITHER I LASTED A WEEK.

MAX, WHICH MEANS SHE LIVED LONGER THAN I DID BY ABOUT SIX DAYS THE TRIP STARTED OUT AS EXPECTED.

LIFTOFF ACHIEVED FULL STEALTH MODE ENGAGED

YOU'RE CERTAIN YOUR BROTHER CAN HANDLE AN IMPROMPTU VISIT?



MAX AND WE WERE OFF!

BWEGZORRRM!



ADJUSTING HOW DO I LOOK?

LIKE ONE OF CALVIN'S SCHOOL TEACHERS



SINCE I'M TRYING TO EVOKE CONCERN INSTEAD OF FEAR, THAT IS GOOD, YES?

HOPE THIS WORKS ENGAGING FTL.



TO DOUBLE CHECK THE PLAN I AM IN DISGUISE FOR THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE CHICKEN, BUT MAY NOT BE HIS AGENTS.

AND FOR ANY HERE TICS IF CHICKEN AGENTS SCREAM ABOUT A LIZARD PERSON HERE ..



THEY WILL NOT BE SEEN AS CREDIBLE AND DESPITE OUR LACK OF AN ACTUAL TELEPATH, THE PROTOTYPE TELESCANNER CAN DETECT HOSTILITY.

I WISH ONE HAD BEEN AVAILABLE, BUT IF THE DEVICE WILL SERVE...



FOR OUR PURPOSES, IT WILL UNLESS SOME THING HAPPENS THAT IS BEYOND ALL EXPECTATION

I'D ACCUSE YOU OF JINXING THINGS, BUT I'VE HAD TO REDEFINE EXPECTATION A LOT SINCE MEETING YOUR KIND



REMIND ME AGAIN, WHY DOES YOUR BROTHER LIVE NEAR BOTH A RAVINE AND A DUNGEON? THE LATTER FITS HIS FANATICISM, BUT THE FORMER?

THE RAVINE WAS THERE?



IT'S BROAD DAY LIGHT ON A SATURDAY YOUR NEPHEW SHOULD BE HOME, YES?

I DON'T SEE HIM ANYWHERE THAT IS ODD.



SMOO! FLARK! SMOOFLARK!

BROTHER MAX DETECTED. DNA AND TELL PATHIC SCANS FAILED PURITY TEST PURIFYING NOW.



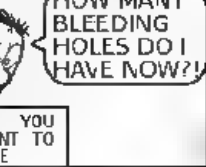
MAX I'D NEVER HEARD KRALTA SWEAR BEFORE, OR SINCE

NO ONE HAS A CELBIRD PURIFIER ANY MORE! ESPECIALLY OUTSIDE THE MILITARY! IT'S A WAR CRIME TO USE ONE!

RECORDED MESSAGE BEGINS



"MAX, IF YOU'RE HEARING THIS, YOU'VE CORRUPTED YOURSELF AND TRIED TO SPREAD THAT CORRUPTION TO MY SON, WHICH I WILL NOT PERMIT. I WARNED YOU THESE ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR ACTIONS." MESSAGE ENDS



CENSORED YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE THESE

IT WAS AT MAXIMUM SETTING! YOUR WOUNDS ARE BEING HELD OPEN WITH CELESTIAL POWER! I COULD COUNTERACT IT AND PATCH THEM UP UNTIL WE COULD REACH A REAL HEALER, BUT THERE ARE SO MANY THAT THERE'S NO TIME YOUR BROTHER'S BOON FROM THE CHICKEN



HAS, UNFORTUNATELY, SUCCEEDED ALL TOO WELL!

NO T ME? THE FTL
COULD TAKE US
THERE INSTANTLY

THE PURIFIER'S BEAM
WENT THROUGH THE
ENGINE COMPART-
MENT IT'S TOO RISKY
THE CHICKEN HAS
LIKELY BEEN
ALERTED
TOO

SO WHAT
NOW?

ONLY THE CHICKEN CAN
MAKE SILENCED GHOSTS,
AND ONLY IN PERSON?

ALL OUR INTELLIGENCE
SAYS SO IT LIMITS HIS
POWER, MUCH LIKE
HOW HE CAN ONLY
TURN MORTALS INTO
BUTT PEOPLE
WITHOUT
HELP

THEN I KNOW
WHAT TO DO.

WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED IN
THE DUNGEON, THE CHICK-
EN BRAGGED ABOUT TURN-
ING ALL MONOTHEISMS IN
TO POOP, BUT THEN HE
SAID YOU WERE ANOTHER'S
POOP SO HE WAS TELLING
THE TRUTH?

THAT EXPLAINS DAD'S
WEIRD BEHAVIOR IN THE
SUPERMARKET THAT ONE
TIME! HE COVERED UP THE
TABLOID HEADLINE IN THE
AISLE AND SAID IT WAS SO
INAPPROPRIATE THAT I
SHOULDN'T EVEN LOOK AT
IT, MUCH LESS READ IT!

THERE'S ONE THING I DON'T
UNDERSTAND IF I'M PART
OF THE PROPHECY, THEN
MY GETTING ARJENFLORB
SYNDROME AND ENDING
UP IN THE CHICKEN'S MASS-
MURDER FOR PROFIT SYS-
TEM WON'T HAPPEN NOT
THAT I DON'T APPRECIATE
YOUR CONCERN FOR ME,
BUT WHAT'S THE DEAL?

YOU'LL BLEED OUT IN A
MATTER OF MINUTES,
UNLESS THE CHICKEN OR
HIS AGENTS GET HERE
FASTER. THEY'LL ENSURE
WE'RE BOTH DEAD, AND
THE CHICKEN
WILL TURN US
BOTH INTO
SILENCED
GHOSTS OF
SOME TYPE. MOST
LIKELY POOP, HIS
FAVORITE

EAT ME.

EAT ME, AND
HIDE UNTIL
YOU CAN
POOP ME OUT
YOU'RE A CAR-
NIVORE, AND
WE KNOW
EACH OTHER
WELL ENOUGH

WHAT?!

YES THE SHIP'S STEALTH
MODE WAS OFF DUE TO
DAMAGE, WHICH IS HOW
THE GOBLINS KNEW WE
WERE THERE THEY OVER-
HEARD KRALTAR'S AND
MY LAST CON-
VERSATION, SO
THEY WEREN'T
FAZED BY HIS
SLITTING MY
THROAT
WITH HIS
CLAWS

LET ME GUESS
"MAN HAS UFO
AFFAIR WITH EL-
DERLY SCHOOL
TEACHER WHO
TURNS OUT TO
BE SHAPESHIF-
TING LIZARD?"

YEP LOOKED
IT UP LATER.

CONSIDERING MY BRO-
THER NEVER TOLD YOU
HIS REAL NAME, DID HE
TELL YOU ABOUT OUR SIS-
TER WALBURGA?

WHO?

WAIT DID THE MAGUS'
DIPLOMATIC OVERTURES
TO THE DUNGEON GOB-
LINS WORK OUT?

ONLY ENOUGH TO
LEARN THAT NONE
OF THEM WILLINGLY
SERVE THE
CHICKEN

THEY MIGHT
HELP YOU,
THEN!

THE LUMBERCHICKEN
CAN'T SILENCE MY GHOST
IF I'M YOUR POOP IN-
STEAD OF HIS AND IF I'M
NOT SILENCED, I CAN
STILL HELP WITH BOTH
MY NEPHEW AND THE
PROPHECY, EVEN
THOUGH I'M DEAD

TRUST ME

YOU SAID YOU HAD HIS
DNA, SO IT WAS BASIC-
ALLY CANNIBALISM,
RIGHT? I THINK THAT
CANNIBALISM OUGHT TO
BE GROUNDS FOR LENIEN-
CY IN MURDERS, SINCE
IT'S LESS WASTEFUL, BUT
NO ONE AT SCHOOL
WANTED TO DEBATE IT!

THE ONLY CLEAR
PICTURE WAS OF
MSS WORM
WOOD! ANYONE
WHO BROUGHT T
UP IN CLASS GOT
SENT TO THE
PRINCIPAL!

I ONLY HAD
THE ONE
PICTURE
THAT
KRALTAR
COULD
HAVE
USED!

THAT'S A "NO," THEN
SHE WAS THE YOUNGEST
OF US, AND WENT OFF
TO SEE THE WORLD AS
SOON AS SHE COULD
ASIDE FROM A FEW POST-
CARDS, I HAVEN'T HEARD
MUCH FROM HER
FOR AWHILE,
AND IF YOU
THINK MY BRO-
THER AND I
CLASH, HE
CLASHES WITH
HER EVEN MORE.
IT'S ONE REASON
SHE LEFT

KLAKRONGG!

THE SHIP HAS
JUST CRASH-
LANDED, INTO
WHAT IS AP-
ARENTLY AN
UNDERGROUND
PART OF THE
DUNGEON.
I SEE GOBLINS
THEY SURROUND
THE SHIP NOW.

GOOD! AS
FOR ME...

EVEN THOUGH IT
PAINS ME VERY
MUCH IF THAT'S
YOUR FINAL WISH, I
WILL DO IT DO YOU
HAVE ANY SPIRITUAL
NEEDS BEFORE I
PROCEED?

I'LL SORT THOSE
OUT WHEN
GET TO THE
OTHER SIDE
SAVE ME AND
MAKE
ME YOUR
POOP

IT MAY HAVE BEEN CANNI-
BALISM, BUT IT WASN'T
MURDER. I WANTED TO DIE
BEFORE MY BROTHER'S
PLAN FOR ME WORKED. THE
IDEA THAT DYING ON YOUR
OWN TERMS IS MURDER IS

FROM THE OLD
TRINITY AND THE
CHICKEN, SINCE
DEAD SLAVES
CAN NO LONG-
ER SERVE
THEIR MAS-
TERS!

BUT HOW
DID A PHOTO-
GRAPHER GET
THOSE PIC-
TURES AT ALL,
GIVEN THEIR
TIMING
WOULD HAVE
TO BE PER-
FECT?

ONE OF
THOSE
GOOFY COIN-
CIDENCES,
I'D GUESS!

THE POINT IS, SHE MAY
HAVE HAD A KID WHO
COULD HAVE TAKEN YOUR
PART IN THE PROPHECY,
SINCE THEY WOULD BE RE-
LATED TO BOTH MY BRO-
THER AND ME AT THE TIME,
I WASN'T CERTAIN

BUT NOW
YOU ARE?

I DIDN'T STAY AROUND LONG AFTER BECOMING A GHOST, JUST IN CASE THE CHICKEN COULD DO SOMETHING ELSE TO ME, AND BECAUSE MY LIBERATION MOVED ME TO THE FRONT OF THE LINE FOR SPIRITUAL PROCESSING. TIFFANY ANSWERED A FEW OF MY QUESTIONS WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED, AND THAT CLEARED THINGS UP.

MY BROTHER PROBABLY SET UP THAT PURIFIER TO BLAST HER, TOO, IF SHE CAME AROUND AND WHO WOULD EXPECT TERROR WEAPON TECHNOLOGY FROM CELESTIAL BIRD PEOPLE TO BE IN A NORMAL SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD? AND LOUIS WAIN, THE ARTIST, COULD APPARENTLY SEE ELDRITCH HORRORS IN OTHER REALITIES SOMEHOW.

EXACTLY. THEY BOTH WANTED TO BE DICTATORS, EVEN THOUGH ONE CLAIMED TO HAVE A YES CHICKEN WHILE THE OTHER DIDN'T. BUT THAT WASN'T ENOUGH. MELVILLE STARTED LOOKING INTO PSYCHOLOGY TO DIFFERENTIATE HIMSELF FROM YOUR DAD.

HOW, IF THEY'RE SO MUCH ALIKE?

ALSO, THE TERM "INSANE" IS ONLY USED BY LAWYERS, NOT PSYCHOLOGISTS. THE POINT IS THAT THE "RELIGION IS A MENTAL ILLNESS" ATHEISTS ARE JUST THE MIRROR OF THE CHICKEN'S "ANY VIEW OTHER THAN MINE IS A MENTAL ILLNESS." THEY TWIST RATIONALITY THE SAME WAY. "WORK HARD AND YOU'LL MAKE IT" IS AN IRRATIONAL BELIEF, FOR EXAMPLE. IT ONLY GUARANTEES YOU'LL BE IGNORED OR GIVEN MORE WORK. THAT WAS WHEN I FIRST MET HER, AND SHE'S BASICALLY THE SAME WAY NOW. SCARY (SINCE ONI ARE DEMONS, AFTER ALL), BUT FAIR WHEN SHE NEEDS TO BE. I WAS USHERED INTO THE "SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES" ROOM WITH A BUNCH OF OTHER NEW GHOSTS AND IT WAS ONE BIG ROOM, LET ME TELL YOU!

MAX WALBURGA HAD ESCAPED TO ANOTHER REALITY WITH HUMANS IN IT. SHE'D HAD A FAMILY THERE AND SHE HAD NO PLANS TO RETURN. SHE WAS DOING SOME ELDRITCH THINGS THERE INVOLVING CATS. TIFFANY'S COUNTERPART IN THAT REALITY KNEW WHY.

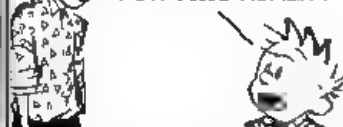
MY AUNT WALBURGA USED TO SAY THE STARS HELD EVIL BEINGS WHO WATCH OVER US AND BRING US TERMINAL CORRUPTION.

I'M SORRY, JON. I AM TERMINAL CORRUPTION.



APPARENTLY, THERE WAS AN EVIL DEMIURGE RULING THERE, TOO, AND IT HAD A WEAKNESS TO CATS. SHE USED ELDRITCH POWERS TO TAKE IT DOWN FOR GOOD.

I WONDER IF I'LL HAVE TO DO THAT FOR THIS REALITY!



DAD SAID ONCE THAT A LOT OF GREAT ARTISTS WERE INSANE. MAYBE THEIR ABILITY TO SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY JUST MADE THEM SEEM THAT WAY?



BE CAREFUL THROWING AROUND TERMS LIKE "INSANE" WHEN YOU'RE NOT QUALIFIED TO DO SO. MELVILLE DID THAT, AND YOU DON'T WANT TO FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS AT ALL.



YES. HIS CONFLICT WITH YOUR DAD STARTED WITH NOT WANTING TO SERVE ANY EVIL GODS, WHICH IS FINE. BUT HE EXTENDED IT TO NOT SERVING ANY GODS BECAUSE HE WANTED TO GIVE ORDERS INSTEAD OF TAKE THEM DIRECTLY.



ONLY LABELS. MELVILLE GOT A PSYCHOLOGY DEGREE BUT HE ONLY LEARNED HOW TO MANIPULATE PEOPLE AND REGURGITATED EVERYTHING ELSE TO PASS THE TESTS. YOUR DAD WOULD CALL PEOPLE HERETICS TO DISCREDIT THEM, WHILE MELVILLE WOULD CALL THEM MENTALLY ILL TO DISCREDIT THEM. DIFFERENT TERMINOLOGY, SAME RESULT.

BUT TO GET BACK ON TOPIC, GOOD THING THE MELVILLE TIMELINE WON'T BE COMING TO PASS.

ARE YOU SURE A PORTAL LEADING TO THAT TIMELINE WON'T SHOW UP SOMEWHERE?



SOUNDS LIKE THE SO-CALLED DOCTORS A DEGREE THAT'S JUST A MAGIC AUTHORITY SYMBOL, SO EVERYONE HAS TO BELIEVE WHATEVER YOU SAY OR WRITE ON PAPERWORK, WHETHER IT'S TRUE OR NOT, AND WHETHER YOU ACTUALLY KNOW ANYTHING OR NOT.



ANYWAY, IT WAS A RARE 0% CHANCE THAT MELVILLE ACTUALLY BECAME A PSYCHOLOGIST, SO HIS DEGREE FELT OUT OF DATE. NO ONE TOOK HIM AS AN AUTHORITY ON ANYTHING, AND HE FINALLY TOOK HIS FRUSTRATIONS OUT ON YOUR DAD. THAT LED TO THEM BOTH KILLING EACH OTHER.



VERY SURE. ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS I LEARNED AFTER I DIED WAS THAT MORE SIMILAR REALITIES ARE LESS LIKELY TO HAVE PORTALS BETWEEN THEM.



MAX TIFFANY MENTIONED IT WHEN SHE PROCESSED ME.

98% OF YOU IS OF ONE REALITY, AND 2% OF YOU IS OF ANOTHER. YOU GO TO WHAT YOU ARE A MAJORITY OF. AS FOR YOUR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, I WILL SEE!



WERE THEY ALL LIBERATED LIKE YOU? OR WERE THERE OTHERS, SINCE IT WASN'T THE "LIBERATED" ROOM?

JUDGING FROM THE TAGS WE HAD TO WEAR, THERE WERE A LOT OF DIFFERENT TYPES.



SOME LIBERATED BY GNOSIS MY WAY OR ANOTHER WAY, SOME LIBERATED BY BEING PUT IN A DEFECTIVE ENOUGH FALSE FORM THAT THEY ESCAPED IT BY LUCK, SOME ATHEISTS WHO JUST LIVED THEIR LIVES AND LET THE GODS TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES, AND A FEW MEMBERS OF SOME THING CALLED DREMVALAAR'S WITNESSES.



MAX WE WERE THERE A LONG TIME SO WE CHATTED WHILE EVERYONE WAS DEALT WITH ONE BY ONE. THE GODS OF THE PLEROMA COUNCIL MOSTLY HAVE NO QUARREL WITH THOSE KINDS OF ATHEISTS, AS LONG AS THEY DON'T ENGAGE IN CHICKEN-THOUGHT BY TYING GODS' WORTHINESS TO THEIR WILLINGNESS TO OBEY OR DERS. SOME LIBERATED ONES TOLD ME OF THE VOWS THEY'D TAKEN. ONE SAID HE'D COME BACK IF THE CHICKEN BANNED SINGAPORE CHOW MAI FUN. AND ANOTHER SAID SHE'D COME BACK IF THE CHICKEN BANNED PUTTING RED BEAN PASTE IN OATMEAL. SO MANY FOOD RULES.



THE DREMVALAAR'S WITNESSES WERE TROUBLE. ONE OF THEM STARTED DOING A SERMON RIGHT THERE IN THE ROOM, AND THAT'S HOW THE TROUBLE BEGAN. DREMVALAAR WAS APPARENTLY A MONOTHEISTIC GOD OF ATHEISM. THEY WERE THE ONE TRUE GOD, AND WORSHIPPERS HAD TO HAVE PERFECT FAITH THAT THEY DIDN'T EXIST.

THAT MAKES NO SENSE AT ALL! IT MAKES EVEN LESS SENSE WHEN YOU KNOW ABOUT THE ONE SECTARIAN SPLIT! FOLLOWERS OF A NONEXISTENT GOD ARE SECTARIAN?!

DREMVALAAR VERSUS POOP-DREMVALAAR!

IT WAS PARTIALLY THE CHICKEN'S FAULT. THE SPLIT WAS OVER WHETHER, WHEN THE CHICKEN ATE ALL THE MONOTHEISTIC GODS AND TURNED THEM INTO POOP, HE ALSO TURNED DREMVALAAR INTO POOP. THE REFORMED DREMVALAAR'S WITNESSES BELIEVED THE CHICKEN COULD DO IT, WHILE THE ORIGINALISTS DIDN'T.

CALVIN: CAN AN OMNIPOTENT CHICKEN GOD TURN A GOD WHO DOESN'T EXIST INTO POOP? AND IF THE NONEXISTENT GOD IS THE ONE TRUE GOD, WHY WOULD HE ALLOW IT?

MAX: IT WAS A TEST OF THE REFORMED ONES' FAITH, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. THE TWO GROUPS GOT INTO A BRAWL, AND AN ONI SECURITY GUARD FINALLY SHOWED UP, MAGICALLY PICKED THEM ALL UP, AND TOLD THEM HE WAS GOING TO SHOVE THEM ALL UP DREMVALAAR'S NONEXISTENT BUTTHOLE OF SCHRÖDINGER'S POOP IF THEY DIDN'T KNOCK IT OFF!

SARANNA: BUTTHOLE OF SCHRÖDINGER'S POOP? WHAT'S THAT?

MAX: A BUTTHOLE THAT MAY OR MAY NOT BE MADE OUT OF POOP. LONG STORY.

ANYWAY, AS THE GUARD WAS LEAVING, ONE OF THE DWS MADE A CRACK ABOUT HOW DREMVALAAR WAS A FALSE GOD WHO WAS DEAD AND IN HELL, BUT POOP-DREMVALAAR WAS THE TRUE GOD WHO RULED FOREVER. SO THE GUARD TURNED AROUND, MAGICALLY PICKED THEM ALL UP AGAIN, AND TOLD THEM THEY'D BE MEETING DREMVALAAR PERSONALLY THEN HE LEFT WITH THEM.

SO THE LESSON IS, STAY AWAY FROM DWS, AND DON'T TICK OFF ONI SECURITY GUARDS WHEN YOU'RE DEAD?

RIGHT, BUT LET ME GET TO THE IMPORTANT PART.

MY PROCESSING WENT WELL. MY BEING PART OF A PROPHECY MEANT THAT CERTAIN SPIRITUAL LEADERS WITH VESTED INTERESTS IN THAT PROPHECY COULD REQUEST ACCESS TO ME. THAT WAS HOW I FIRST MET SHAMAN GHEFZARAL OF THE DUNGEON GOBLINS.

DID HE HAVE TO SCRY YOU THROUGH FLAMES? I KNOW THAT'S SOMETHING HE DOES, ALTHOUGH I'VE ONLY SEEN HIM DO IT ONCE. IT'S NOT OFTEN SHOWN TO NON-CLERICS.

I THINK SO! THERE WAS A YELLOWISH-ORANGE GLOW AROUND HIM WHEN WE FIRST SPOKE!

HE'D HAD A VISION FROM TIFFANY ABOUT THE PROPHECY AND WHO WAS INVOLVED IN IT, AND SHE POINTED HIM TO ME. WE MADE A DEAL TO KEEP IN CONTACT. I ASKED HIM IF HE KNEW WHAT HAPPENED TO KRALTAR, BUT HE SAID THAT WAS A MATTER OF GOBLIN SECURITY AND REFUSED TO ELABORATE. I STILL WONDER WHAT HE MEANT.

AND SPEAKING OF WHAT HAPPENED TO PEOPLE, I'VE PUT OFF YOUR REUNION WITH YOUR SISTER LONG ENOUGH.

OKAY, SINCE I THINK I'M PREPARED FOR IT BY NOW!

HOLD ON TO ME, EVEN WHEN YOU'RE PREPARED, IT'S A LOT TO TAKE IN.

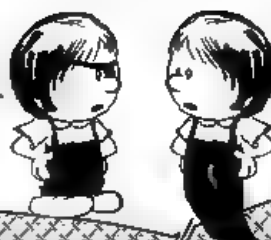
READY WHEN YOU ARE!

THERE ARE DIMENSIONS WHERE EVERYONE IN A SPECIES CAN DO THIS, NOT JUST IDENTICAL TWINS. IT'S CALLED DREAMFASTING IN THOSE PLACES.

I WONDER WHAT IT'S LIKE FOR THEM. I'M READY.

INSIDE A SHARED MINDSCAPE

WHOA! ABSORBING TEN YEARS WORTH OF MEMORIES AT ONCE IS A LOT! ALTHOUGH, GIVEN WHAT MAX JUST SAID ABOUT THE TIMELINE'S HAVING TO BE FIXED, IS THAT WHY WE'RE STILL KIDS INSTEAD OF TEEN AGERS RIGHT NOW?



YES, BUT SINCE I'M A GHOST, I ALSO DON'T AGE ANYMORE UNLESS I WANT TO, AND I DON'T WANT TO YET. THE EXACT CONVERSATION I HAD WITH MAX SHOULD BE ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO. WE WERE BOTH GHOSTS THEN, WE WERE TALKING ABOUT HOW SOME OF THE HELLS WORKED, HE MENTIONED A HELL OF UNAGING, AND THAT WAS HOW IT CAME UP.

SARANNA-VISION: INTERESTING. I SENSE THAT SUSIE HAS DEEPER QUESTIONS. I WILL ANSWER THEM TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY, SINCE THEY INVOLVE BOTH SUSIE AND YOU.

I WONDER, WAS ONE OF THE DREAMS I HAD ACTUALLY A DREAM?

SARANNA-VISION: WHILE YOU PROCESS SUSIE'S MEMORIES, I WILL EXAMINE THIS SUPPOSED MINDSCAPE OF YOURS.

INSIDE SUSIE'S MAYBE DREAM



OH, MY HEAD! THIS IS THE WRONG ONE! OH, WELL. SHE WILL SOON BREAK ANOTHER COMMANDMENT WHEN I FEEL BETTER, AND I'LL GO INSIDE HER HEAD AND GET HER THEN!


A FEW DAYS BEFORE I GOT ARJENFLORB SYNDROME, I DREAMED OF A WEIRD HATED LUMBER-CHICKEN.



SARANNA-VISION: ANALYZING... THAT WAS NOT A DREAM. THE CHICKEN GOD WAS ACTUALLY TALKING TO YOU, ALBEIT ERRONEOUSLY. THE INCUBATION PERIOD OF ARJENFLORB SYNDROME IS FROM SEVERAL DAYS TO A WEEK AT MOST, WHICH PUTS IT IN RANGE FOR HIM TO HAVE INFECTED YOU WITH IT AT THAT TIME WITH HIS DIVINE POWER. AND HIS WEIRD HAT WAS A HOT WATER BOTTLE, TO HELP WITH HIS HEADACHE AT THE TIME.

WAIT, THAT BLASPHEMY INDUCED MIGRAINE! AND IT WASN'T JUST A RUMOR THAT THE SYNDROME WAS A WAY FOR THE CHICKEN TO KILL HERETICS, AT LEAST SOME OF THE TIME! IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN HER, NOT ME.


IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN NEITHER OF YOU, REGARDLESS OF ANYTHING ELSE, AN EVIL GOD'S SPITE, HOWEVER MISAIMED, IS NO ONE'S FAULT BUT THE GOD'S. WITHOUT THAT MIGRAINE, MAX'S RESCUE MISSION WOULD HAVE LIKELY FAILED, AND THE CHICKEN WOULD WIN LONG-TERM, DOOMING US ALL!



HOW DO YOU KNOW HOW TO COUNSEL PEOPLE VOICE IN MY SISTER'S HEAD?

SARANNA-VISION: I HELP KEEP YOUR SISTER ALIVE AND GOING. I CAN DO THE LATTER FOR YOU, IF NOT THE FORMER, BECAUSE IT'S IN BOTH YOUR INTEREST AND HERS TO DO SO.

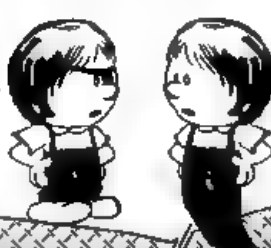
SARANNA-VISION: FOR THE SAME REASON, I HAVE LET YOU INTO HER HEAD INSTEAD OF FREEZING YOU OUT YOU ARE NOT HOSTILE TO HER; YOUR MEMORIES SHOW THAT MAX HAD SIMON MAGUSSAURUS LIBERATE YOU SOON AFTER YOU ARRIVED, SINCE HE HAD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT YOU WERE SARANNA'S REFLECTION, SO THE CHICKEN HAS NO MEANS TO GET HER MEMORIES FROM YOU; AND THE SNOW DEMONS WHO PUT ME HERE ARE PLEASED BY THAT.



AND THEY PUT YOU HERE BEFORE THE CHICKEN COULD GET IN HER HEAD TO INFECT HER! AND HER MEMORIES SAY THAT THE CHICKEN'S KEEPING HER ALIVE TO TRY TO GET ACCESS TO HER POWER!

YES. THEY WERE PLANNING ON DEALING WITH HER SOON, BUT THE INCIDENT WITH YOU CONVINCED THEM THAT RIGHT THEN WAS THE PERFECT TIME, BOTH TO DO WHAT THEY DO AND TO GET ONE OVER ON THE CHICKEN. YOU'LL UNDERSTAND MORE WHEN YOU PROCESS HER MEMORIES AS SHE HAS YOURS.

SO I WAS THE CHICKEN'S REAL TARGET ALL ALONG. AT LEAST YOU GOT SOMETHING LIKE A NORMAL LIFE FOR YEARS BEFORE THAT, EVEN IF CALVIN WAS THE INCURABLE NEIRDNESS POSTER CHILD TO YOU! NOT THAT THE GOBLINS HAVEN'T BEEN GOOD TO ME!




HE SEEMS TO HAVE MELLOWED OUT IN THE YEARS SINCE I LEFT, YES AND HAD NO IDEA THAT COUSIN YOLANDA HAD GOTTEN SO FANATICAL! IF YOU'D ESCAPED AR, ENFLORB SYNDROME AND DIDN'T HAVE THE SNOW DEMONS' PROTECTION, SHE'D HAVE HAD YOU THROWN IN THE DUNGEON AND KILLED FOR SOMETHING!

SARANNA VISION: SHAMAN GHEFZARAL HAS BEEN WATCHING ALL YOUR DEALINGS WITH THE GHOSTS TO DETERMINE WHETHER YOU ARE WORTHY OF FULFILLING THE PROPHECY.

AT LEAST WE CAN TALK AT THE SPEED OF THOUGHT IN HERE, SO MUCH TO LEARN!


SARANNA VISION: HE CANNOT SEE INSIDE HERE, BUT BOTH YOU AND CALVIN ARE ON THE VERGE OF PASSING THE TEST!



WE'VE BEEN WAITING HERE FOR A FEW MINUTES HOW MUCH LONGER WILL THEY TAKE?

BOTH OF THEM STARTED TALKING AT ONCE. I SOON LEARNED THE IMPORTANT BITS OF WHAT THEY KNEW AFTER PUTTING THEIR HEADS TOGETHER. SOME ARJENFLORB INFECTIONS WERE DELIBERATELY CAJSED BY THE CHICKEN, SO THAT WASN'T A RUMOR AND HE WAS EVEN MORE EVIL THAN WE THOUGHT. AND SARANNA'S EVIL COUSIN WAS NAMED YOLANDA. (WHAT WAS UP WITH CHICKENIST FANATICS KEEPING THEIR REAL NAMES SECRET?) ALSO, SARANNA WAS THE CHICKEN'S INTENDED TARGET, NOT SUSIE. AND THE SNOW DEMONS SAVED HER WITH THEIR DEAL. LOOKING BACK I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY HANDEDLED KNOWING THAT SO WELL.

WELL, MOST OF THE IMPORTANT BITS. HOW HAD MAX BEEN ABLE TO CONTACT SARANNA WHEN THE BARRIER BETWEEN REALMS WAS WEAK? HOW HAD BRIAN ARRIVED HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE? SUSIE AND SARANNA MIGHT KNOW THE ANSWERS, BUT I DIDN'T YET.




JUST SO WE'RE ALL ON THE SAME PAGE, I'LL FILL YOU IN ON WHAT ELSE DID AS A GHOST

THAT REMINDS ME: I NEED TO GET BACK IN TOUCH WITH "SEYMOUR," OR 5 MKDVBPHDZRTB-013804-2831025427049128090-3269983702310785328.

ANOTHER ROBOT? HOW MANY ARE YOU IN CONTACT WITH?

NO, SEYMOUR IS THE NAME HE WAS BORN WITH. HIS ROBOT NAME IS HONORARY.

YOU HAVE A LOT OF FRIENDS!

THEY'RE WAKING UP! LOOK!

BACK OUTSIDE

I SPENT THE FIRST YEARS OF MY GHOSTHOOD GETTING USED TO IT. THE ORIENTATION COULD ONLY SHOW ME SO MUCH, AND DISCOVERING THE LIBRARY OF BOOKS BURNED IN THE LIVING WORLD WAS A GODSEND OR AN ONI SEND, SINCE MY CASEWORKER H. ROAKI TOLD ME ABOUT IT.

I WAS STILL WORRIED ABOUT YOU AND SEEING WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO SUSIE, WHOM I BARELY KNEW AT THE TIME, AND HER TWIN WHOM I DIDN'T KNOW AT ALL AT THE TIME. IT ONLY GOT WORSE.



GIVEN ALL THE MASS MURDERS?

EXACTLY THERE WAS A REALM-WIDE PARTY FOR A WEEK AFTER THE BIG FOUR WERE TURNED INTO POOP GHOSTS BUT WHEN THE CHICKEN TOOK OVER THE RJOBS AND KILLED MORE IN MONTHS THAN THEY HAD IN YEARS UNTIL HE GOT HIS BLOODTHIRST SLIGHTLY UNDER CONTROL.

MAX I DECIDED TO TRY AND PULL CALVIN HERE TO FIND OUT HOW HE WAS DOING. IT DEFIED THE PROPHECY, SINCE SOME OTHER PARTS OF IT HADN'T YET COME TO PASS, BUT SHAMAN GHEFZARAL AGREED IT WAS AN EMERGENCY. SOME PROPHECIES COULD BE BENT TO A DEGREE WITHOUT BREAKING THEM ENTIRELY UNFORTUNATELY WE FOUND OUT THAT THIS PROPHECY WOULDN'T BEND THAT WAY.

BRIAN CALVIN: BRIAN.

WOLF CALVIN: SEYMOUR.




IT TURNED OUT THAT, SINCE THE PROPHECY WOULDN'T BEND, SOMETHING ELSE HAD TO: THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN REALITIES. ZWAB THE GOBLIN TRIED STABILIZING THE PORTAL, BUT IT WAS BEYOND HIS SKILL TO DO SO, EVEN WITH GHEFZARAL'S ASSISTANCE.

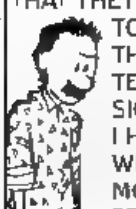
ZWAB WAS BEFORE MY TIME. I HOPE HE DIDN'T END UP INJURED!

NO, BUT WE PULLED BRIAN THE ROBOT HERE INSTEAD, AND PUT SEYMOUR THE WOLF WHERE BRIAN USED TO BE, AS YOU KNOW!



TIFFANY WAS FURIOUS, AND THE ON-SPACE WARDENS WERE, TOO. UNTIL THEY TRIED PUTTING BRIAN AND SEYMOUR BACK, AND WERE UNABLE TO TRYING TO BREAK THIS PROPHECY ENDED UP MAKING IT EVEN STRONGER. LUCKY FOR US YOU'VE NEVER SEEN TIFFANY REALLY ANGRY.

BRIAN AND SEYMOUR WERE PUT IN A MULTIVERSAL HOLDING ROOM DURING THE MONTH-LONG ATTEMPT TO PUT THEM BOTH BACK, AND THEY BONDED ENOUGH THAT THEY'RE STILL IN TOUCH, SINCE THEY'RE BOTH ALTERNATE VERSIONS OF CALVIN. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT PART SEYMOUR HAS IN THE PROPHECY, IF ANY.



I SUSPECT THAT HE HAS A PART TO PLAY IN A DIFFERENT PROPHECY, GIVEN OUR LAST CORRESPONDENCE. HE IS GOING UP AGAINST ANOTHER DEMIURGE, THE LATHESHEEP, AND TURNING THAT DEMIURGE'S FOLLOWERS INTO MUTTON.



HAVE ANOTHER QUESTION ABOUT THE DUNGEON GOBLINS. ALL THE ONES EVERYONE TALKS ABOUT GET CALLED "HE". ARE THEY ALL GUYS?



SARANNA, YOU'D KNOW THIS BETTER THAN I. MOST PRETEND TO BE. DUE TO THE CHICKEN'S GENDER BIASES, BUT THEY ACTUALLY ONLY TAKE ON A GENDER ONCE A MONTH, DURING MATING SEASON.



BUT WHEN THE CHICKEN SUBVERTED THEIR FEY MAGIC TO MAKE THE MAGICAL TETHER USED TO ENSLAVE THEM, HE TETHERED THE REMATING, TOO. HE ONLY ALLOWS IT WHEN HE NEEDS THEM TO PRODUCE MORE SLAVES.



BUT DUE TO HIS NOT BEING FEY, AND NOT HAVING VISION LIKE MINE, HE CAN HAVE TROUBLE TELLING THEM APART AT ALL, MUCH LESS DETERMINING THEIR GENDER. IRONIC, GIVEN HIS FIXATION ON GENDER.



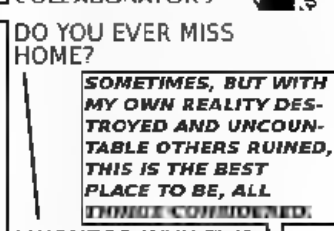
OKAY. BUT IF HIS POWERS DON'T WORK ON FEY, HOW DID HE SUBVERT THEIR MAGIC TO ENSLAVE THEM IN THE FIRST PLACE?



GHEFZARAL SAID HIS PREDECESSOR WAS CORRUPT AND LET THE CHICKEN IN.



THE GOBLINS WERE ABLE TO FIX THE MAJOR WEAKNESS IN THEIR MAGIC THAT THE CHICKEN EXPLOITED WITH GHIMZUROS' HELP, THOUGH THEY DON'T TALK ABOUT WHAT IT WAS. THE ONLY WAY TO BREAK THE TETHER IS TO TAKE THE CHICKEN DOWN, AND TO ENSURE THERE AREN'T ANY MORE "ZURLINGS," OR TRAITOROUS COLLABORATORS!



BRIAN: MY INITIAL ARRIVAL IN THIS REALITY WAS CONFUSING, BUT AS WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF MY NATIVE REALITY I ADAPTED QUICKLY.

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I WAS AS GOOD AT TRANSLATING THEN AS I AM NOW, ALTHOUGH I GAVE THE SHORT VERSION OF WHAT I SAID AT THE TIME.



I HAD BEEN WANDERING THROUGH SEVERAL DIFFERENT REALITIES BEFORE I WAS PULLED HERE, MOSTLY FILLED WITH CORPSES AND WRECKAGE OF WHATEVER THEY HAD LEFT BEHIND. THIS WAS THE FIRST PLACE I FOUND WHERE I COULD ACTUALLY SPEAK WITH THE DEAD. AFTER I FOUND OUT THAT RETURNING WAS NOT AN OPTION, I MADE THE BEST OF THINGS HERE.



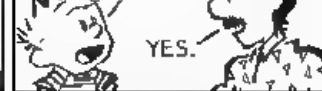
DO YOU EVER MISS HOME?



BRIAN AND I TOOK A CLASS ON THE MULTIVERSE AND COSMOLOGY DURING THE YEARS WE WERE WAITING FOR YOU, AND WE LEARNED THAT WE'RE MORE FORTUNATE THAN MANY OTHER REALITIES, BELIEVE IT OR NOT!



A TORTURING, MASS-MURDERING, ELGENTIC, AXE WIELDING CHICKEN GOD WITH AN ARMY OF TRANSFORMED TELEKINETIC BUTT PEOPLE, BRAINWASHED ORDINARY PEOPLE, ENSLAVED DUNGEON GOBLINS, WILLING GUN GNOMES, AND GODS KNOW WHAT ELSE COULD BE WORSE?



THE REASON THE PLEROMA COUNCIL WORKS SO WELL IS BECAUSE THE MONOTHEISTIC GODS WHO COULD NOT PLAY WELL WITH OTHERS ARE DEAD. IN REALITIES WHERE THEY ARE NOT, THEY FIGHT SO HARD TO CLAIM ULTIMATE LEADERSHIP THAT THEY LAY THE LOCAL UNIVERSE TO WASTE MORE OFTEN THAN NOT. THE CHICKEN'S TURNING THE MOST AUTHORITARIAN GODS, HIS DIRECT COMPETITION, INTO POOP ENSURED THIS REALITY'S LONG-TERM SURVIVAL.



WHAT IF A GOD IN THE COUNCIL GETS CORRUPTED AND TRIES TO CLAIM THEY'RE THE ONLY TRUE GOD WHO GETS TO RUN THINGS?



AND AS YOU TOLD SUSIE, SOME OF THE ONES ARE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO HOLD THE GODS LEASHES IF MULTIPLE ONES GET CORRUPTED AT ONCE.



SO ALL MONOTHEISMS END UP CORRUPTED EVENTUALLY?

IT SEEMS SO. ALL THE WORSHIPPERS WHO CARE MORE ABOUT COMPASSION THAN POWER GET CALLED RENEGADES AND WIPED OUT BY THE WORSE ONES.

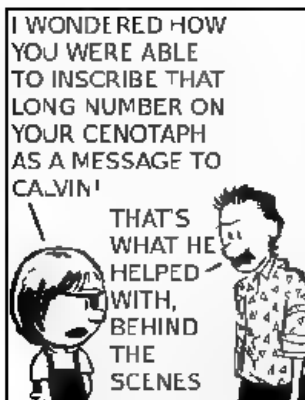


I'VE MENTIONED THE RENEGADE CHRISTIANS BEFORE, BUT THERE ARE SO MANY OTHERS. SOME FORMS OF PLURALISTIC MONOTHEISM CAN ADAPT TO POLYTHEISM AND SURVIVE. I HAVE NO IDEA ABOUT DREMVALAAR, EVEN THOUGH BRIAN FOUND THEIR COUNTERPART IN ANOTHER REALITY DURING HIS WANDERINGS.



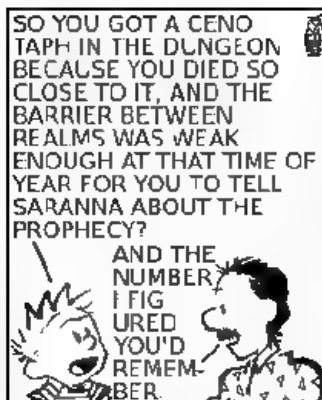
BUT LET ME GET BACK TO MY GHOSTLY EXPLOITS. BRIAN HAD ADAPTED TO MY LANGUAGE, AS WELL AS TO FEEDING ON ECTOPLASM TO NOT STARVE AFTER THE FAILED ATTEMPT TO PUT HIM BACK, HE STARTED STUDYING HOW THIS GHOST REALM WORKED, JUST IN CASE IT CAME IN HANDY AFTER SARANNA ARRIVED IN THE DUNGEON.





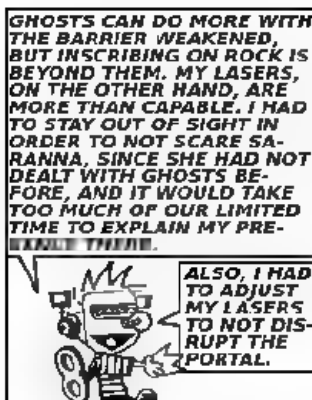
I WONDERED HOW YOU WERE ABLE TO INSCRIBE THAT LONG NUMBER ON YOUR CENOTAPH AS A MESSAGE TO CALVIN!

THAT'S WHAT HE HELPED WITH, BEHIND THE SCENES



SO YOU GOT A CENO TAPH IN THE DUNGEON BECAUSE YOU DIED SO CLOSE TO IT, AND THE BARRIER BETWEEN REALMS WAS WEAK ENOUGH AT THAT TIME OF YEAR FOR YOU TO TELL SARANNA ABOUT THE PROPHECY?

AND THE NUMBER I FIGURED YOU'D REMEMBER.



GHOSTS CAN DO MORE WITH THE BARRIER WEAKENED, BUT INSCRIBING ON ROCK IS BEYOND THEM. MY LASERS, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE MORE THAN CAPABLE. I HAD TO STAY OUT OF SIGHT IN ORDER TO NOT SCARE SARANNA, SINCE SHE HAD NOT DEALT WITH GHOSTS BEFORE, AND IT WOULD TAKE TOO MUCH OF OUR LIMITED TIME TO EXPLAIN MY PRE-ARRANGE THEM.

ALSO, I HAD TO ADJUST MY LASERS TO NOT DISRUPT THE PORTAL.

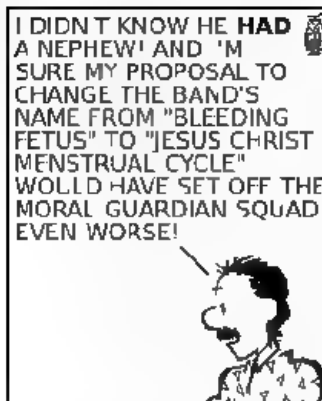


THAT REMINDS ME! AFTER GETTING OUT OF JAIL FOR OUR ALBUM, MY BAND HAD TO SCRAP PLANS FOR A SECOND ONE, BUT I HAD A SONG OR TWO WRITTEN ALREADY I TOLD KRALTAR ABOUT ONE OF THEM ONCE IF YOU RUN INTO HIM YOU CAN SING IT FOR HIM SO HE KNOWS YOU'RE MY NEPHEW FOR CERTAIN, SINCE YOU NEVER GOT TO MEET BEFORE I DIED!



ONE EXPERIMENTAL SONG LATER, WITH BRIAN PROVIDING ACOUSTIC GUITAR SOUNDS

THAT'S COOL! ALTHOUGH THE MORAL GUARDIAN SQUAD WOULD HAVE REALLY NAILED YOU FOR IT! AND IS IT ABOUT THE REAL ONE, OR THE NEPHEW NAMED AFTER HIM?



I DIDN'T KNOW HE HAD A NEPHEW! AND 'M SURE MY PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE BAND'S NAME FROM "BLEEDING FETUS" TO "JESUS CHRIST MENSTRUAL CYCLE" WOULD HAVE SET OFF THE MORAL GUARDIAN SQUAD EVEN WORSE!



I GET THE BLOOD AND JESUS REFERENCES, BUT WHY ARE REFERENCES TO FEET AND SOME KIND OF BIKE OFFENSIVE?

GODS, I FORGOT NOTHING YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT AS LONG AS THE CHICKEN IS A THREAT TO US ALL!



SOUNDS LIKE MORE WAYS TO GET HIS ATTENTION! "CHICKEN, I'LL PUT MY FEET UP YOUR CLOACA!" "AND THEN I'LL DRIVE MY MENSTRUAL CYCLE UP IT!"



UH RIGHT THOSE WILL DEFINITELY OFFEND THE CHICKEN, EITHER WAY! AND THEN YOU JUST HUNG OUT HERE UNTIL SUSIE ARRIVED, AND THEN EVENTUALLY PULLED US HERE TO TELL US ALL THIS?

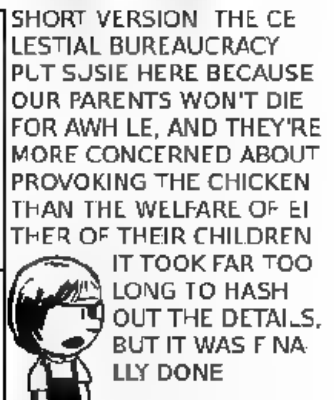


WE DID A LOT MORE THAN HANG OUT, BUT ALL THE THINGS WE LEARNED IN THOSE FEW YEARS WOULD BE A WHOLE OTHER STORY IN ITSELF

IT DID TAKE ME A LONG TIME TO GET HERE!



AND I HAD TO STABILIZE THE PORTAL THAT BROUGHT YOU HERE BECAUSE IT WAS OFF-SCHEDULE. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH MORE UNPREDICTABLE IF I HAD NOT. IT IS LIKELY ANOTHER REASON WHY PROPHECY KEPT ME HERE. WE CANNOT AFFORD UNPREDICTABILITY AT THIS POINT, NOT WITH THE CHICKEN'S DOOM AT HAND.



SHORT VERSION THE CELESTIAL BUREAUCRACY PUT SUSIE HERE BECAUSE OUR PARENTS WON'T DIE FOR AWHLE, AND THEY'RE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT PROVOKING THE CHICKEN THAN THE WELFARE OF EITHER OF THEIR CHILDREN

IT TOOK FAR TOO LONG TO HASH OUT THE DETAILS, BUT IT WAS FINALLY DONE



YOU'RE SURE YOU'RE HANDLING HAVING BOTH YOUR MEMORIES AND SUSIE'S IN YOUR HEAD?

AS LONG AS I DON'T TRY TO CALL ON EVERYTHING ALL AT ONCE, I CAN DEAL WITH IT. HER IDEA OF YOU IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM MINE, BUT SHE ONLY KNOWS THE OLDER YOU

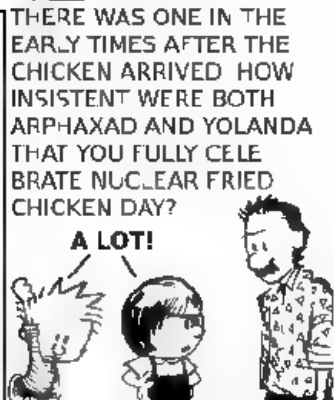


OR SHOULD I SAY THE YOUNGER YOU? I MEAN THAT HAVING YOUR DAD GO FANATICAL AND DRIVE YOU TO CRACK BOOKS TO OPPOSE HIM AND HIS GOD, PLUS HIS THROWING YOU IN A DUNGEON, WOULD CHANGE ANYBODY A LOT!



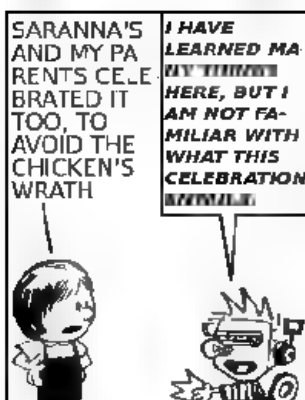
I GET IT I WONDER, THOUGH, HOW ANYONE KNOWS WHETHER A GIVEN PROPHECY'S REAL OR NOT. THERE HAD TO HAVE BEEN FAKE ONES SOMETIME, RIGHT?

YES, SINCE WE HAVE SO MUCH RIDING ON THIS PROPHECY!



THERE WAS ONE IN THE EARLY TIMES AFTER THE CHICKEN ARRIVED HOW INSISTENT WERE BOTH ARPHAXAD AND YOLANDA THAT YOU FULLY CELEBRATE NUCLEAR FRIED CHICKEN DAY?

A LOT!

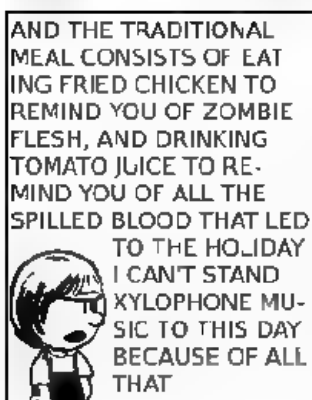


SARANNA'S AND MY PARENTS CELEBRATED IT TOO, TO AVOID THE CHICKEN'S WRATH

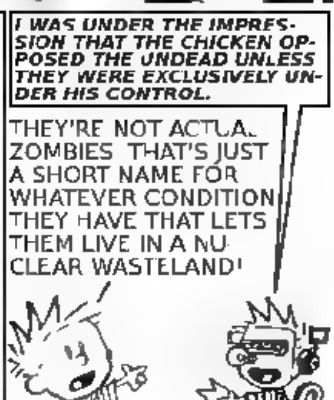
I HAVE LEARNED MANY THINGS HERE, BUT I AM NOT FAMILIAR WITH WHAT THIS CELEBRATION REPRESENTS



WE SING THE TRADITIONAL HYMN "PROMISED LAND FOR NUCLEAR ZOMBIES (DEATH IS BETTER THAN SUFFERING IF YOU WON'T DO WHAT I WANT)," USING THE RECORDING OF THE CHICKEN HIMSELF PLAYING THE XYLOPHONE SOLO IN IT AND THEN WE HAVE THE TRADITIONAL MEAL AFTERWARDS



AND THE TRADITIONAL MEAL CONSISTS OF EATING FRIED CHICKEN TO REMIND YOU OF ZOMBIE FLESH, AND DRINKING TOMATO JUICE TO REMIND YOU OF ALL THE SPILLED BLOOD THAT LED TO THE HOLIDAY I CAN'T STAND XYLOPHONE MUSIC TO THIS DAY BECAUSE OF ALL THAT



I WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THE CHICKEN OPPOSED THE UNDEAD UNLESS THEY WERE EXCLUSIVELY UNDER HIS CONTROL.

THEY'RE NOT ACTUAL ZOMBIES THAT'S JUST A SHORT NAME FOR WHATEVER CONDITION THEY HAVE THAT LETS THEM LIVE IN A NUCLEAR WASTELAND!

I LOOKED UP THE DETAILS OF IT AFTER I ARRIVED AND WENT THROUGH OR ENTATION ALL THE GHOSTS OF PEOPLE BEING MASS MURDERED BY THE BIG FOUR AND THEN THE CHICKEN REMINDED ME OF IT IT WAS SHEER MORBID CURIOSITY ON MY PART



IT WAS SOMETHING THE OLD TRINITY STARTED ONE GROUP OF PEOPLE GOT EXILED FROM THE R-HOMELAND AND WERE OPPRESSED FOR AGES, AND THERE WAS A PROPHECY THAT THEY'D GET IT BACK, AND THEN THEY'D ALL DIE EXCEPT FOR A CHUNK OF THEM WHO WOULD CONVERT TO THE OLD TRINITY



BUT SURELY OTHER PEOPLE HAD MOVED INTO THEIR OLD HOMELAND IN THE MEANTIME?

EXACTLY YET ANOTHER FIGHT OVER WHO GETS TO RIGHTFULLY LIVE ON WHICH LAND

WHAT MADE THIS FIGHT MORE SPECIAL THAN OTHERS?

THE SUPPOSED PROPHECY ABOUT IT



IT STATED THAT THE OLD TRINITY WOULD TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN AFFAIRS AND BECOME THE OFFICIAL RULER OF EARTH INSTEAD OF WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES HALF THE TIME SOME OF THE EXILES DIDN'T BELIEVE THE DEATH AND CONVERSION ON PART OF THE PROPHECY, AND THEY BEFRIENDED RICH AND POWERFUL OLD TRINITY WORSHIPPERS IN ORDER TO GET THEIR HELP GOING TO WAR



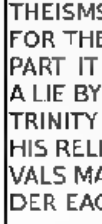
AND THEN THE PROPHECY GOT BROKEN WHEN THE LUMBERCHICKEN CAME AND TURNED THE OLD TRINITY INTO THE BUTT VICEROY, OR SO WE THOUGHT UNTIL HE MADE THAT DEAL WITH THE EXILES ON THE BUTT VICEROY'S BEHALF, RIGHT? OR AM I MISSING SOMETHING HERE?



THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT, TOO, BUT ANY PROPHECY THAT GETS BENT OR BROKEN IS SUPPOSED TO BACKLASH IN SOME WAY I DOUBLE CHECKED THE PROPHECY RECORDS HERE IT WAS NEVER A REAL PROPHECY THE BACKLASH FROM IT WASN'T SUBTLE, IT WAS NONEXISTENT.



NEITHER THE EXILES NOR THE CURRENT INHABITANTS OF THE LAND WORSHIPPED THE OLD TRINITY THEY WORSHIPPED OTHER MONOTHEISMS INSTEAD FOR THE MOST PART IT WAS ALL A LIE BY THE OLD TRINITY TO MAKE HIS RELIGIOUS RIVALS MASS MURDER EACH OTHER



AND WHILE THE OLD TRINITY LOVED BLOODY BATTLE, IT ESPECIALLY LOVED BLOODY BATTLE TILTED GREATLY IN FAVOR OF ITS CHOSEN SIDE.

YES, THE EXILES, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THEIR FRIENDS, HAD A GREAT ADVANTAGE. BUT, ON BOTH SIDES, IT WAS MOSTLY THE LEADERS PUSHING TO KEEP THE WAR GOING

WHILE ORDINARY CIVILIANS AND CHILDREN DIED FOR THEM.



AS WELL AS THE ACTUAL COMBATANTS WHOSE ATROCITIES GOT WORSE AND WORSE THE END CAME WHEN THE CHICKEN OFFERED THE EXILES A DEAL THEY COULD WORSHIP HIM OR NOT, BUT EITHER WAY HE WOULD ENSURE THEIR LASTING VICTORY THEY WERE CLOSE TO WINNING, BUT THAT WORD CONVINCED THEM



WELL, THAT AND A DEMONSTRATION OF WHAT HE COULD DO. HE SAID THEY ALL WOULD HAVE THE LAND TO THEMSELVES AS LONG AS THEY LIVED, THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY ADAPT TO ANY ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IN IT, AND HE WOULD SET UP A SHIELD TO PROTECT THEM FROM ALL OUTSIDE HOSTILE FORCES.



WHAT DID HE WANT IN RETURN FOR ALL THAT? HIS NOT REQUIRING WORSHIP IS NOT LIKE HIM, AND HIS DOING FAVORS IS EVEN LESS SO.

ONE THING FOR THEM TO STOP SHOWING ANY MERCY AND DESTROY ALL ENEMIES THERE



MAX THEIR LEADERS AGREED TO THE TERMS AND WIPE OUT THEIR ENEMIES ENTIRELY AND THAT LED TO THE CHICKEN'S MASTERSTROKE THEY HAD A STOCKPILE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, AND HE DELIBERATELY SET THEM ALL OFF AT ONCE INSIDE THEIR SHIELD.



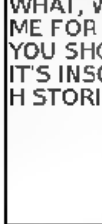
EVERYTHING LIVING IN THAT LAND DIED IN THE SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS, EXCEPT FOR THE PEOPLE WHOSE LAND IT NOW OFFICIALLY WAS BY THE CHICKEN'S DECREE AND THEY FOUND THAT THEY WERE MUTATED TO THE POINT WHERE THEY COULD SUSTAIN THEMSELVES BY FEEDING ON THE RADIATION ITSELF



OUTSIDE THE LAND, THE RADIATION LEVELS WERE LOW ENOUGH BY COMPARISON THAT THEIR NEW FORMS STARVED, SO THEY WERE STUCK BEHIND THEIR SHIELD THEY ALSO FOUND THAT THEY WERE STERILE FROM THE RADIATION AND WOULD HAVE NO DESCENDANTS THEY COMPLAINED TO THE CHICKEN, AND HE SAID



"YOUR LAND IS NOW ENTIRELY YOURS, YOU ARE UNIQUELY SUITED TO IT FOR LIFE, AND NO ONE WILL TAKE IT FROM YOU! I NEVER SAID I'D LET YOUR DESCENDANTS HAVE IT! WHAT, WILL YOU CALL ON ME FOR MERCY WHEN YOU SHOWED NONE?" IT'S INSCRIBED ON THAT HISTORICAL PLAQUE!



YES THEY'RE LEFT TO DIE OF OLD AGE OR COMMIT SUICIDE, AND THE SHIELD KEEPS ALL OF THE RADIATION INSIDE. THE WORST THING IS, THE OLD TRINITY PICKED SIDES FOR THEIR "PROPHECY" BY FLIPPING A COIN, AND THE OTHER SIDE ACTS THE SAME WAY IN REAL TIES WHERE IT GETS THE POWER, THE LAND, AND THE CHICKEN'S INTERVENTION. NO CLEAR DEATH FOR BOTH SIDES



SO, BRIAN, THAT'S WHY YOU HADN'T HEARD OF THAT HOL DAY. ALL THE RESEARCH I DID ON IT WAS BEFORE YOU GOT HERE, AND NO ONE ACKNOWLEDGES IT UNLESS IT COMES UP, MUCH LESS CELEBRATES IT, UNLESS THEY'RE IN THE LUMBERCHICKEN'S CROSSHAIRS AND FORCED TO DO IT!



AND THE DEAD WHO DO ARE THE ONES IN THE LUMBERCHICKEN'S BOSOM AND FAR, FAR AWAY FROM THIS PLACE!

THAT MAKES SENSE. MY PEOPLE HAVE A RARELY-MENTIONED GOD OF RUIN WHO ACTED SIMILARLY.



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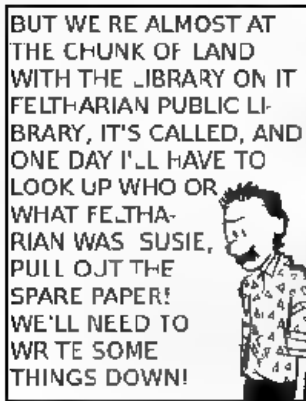
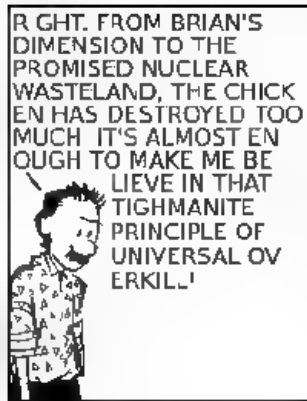
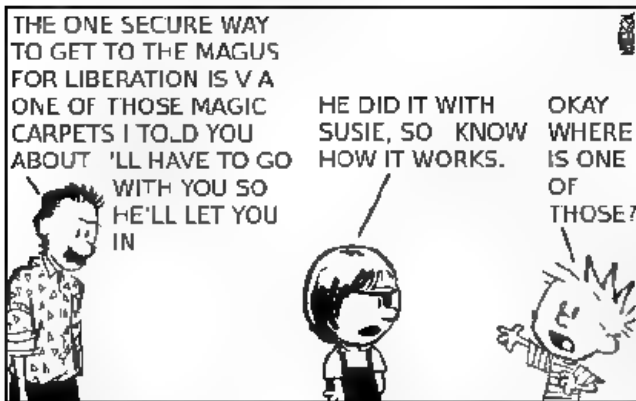
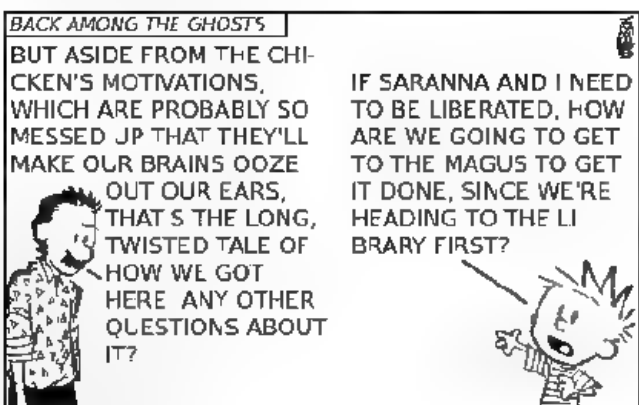
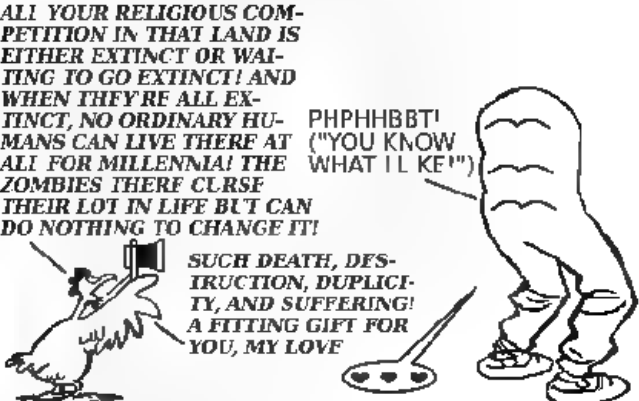
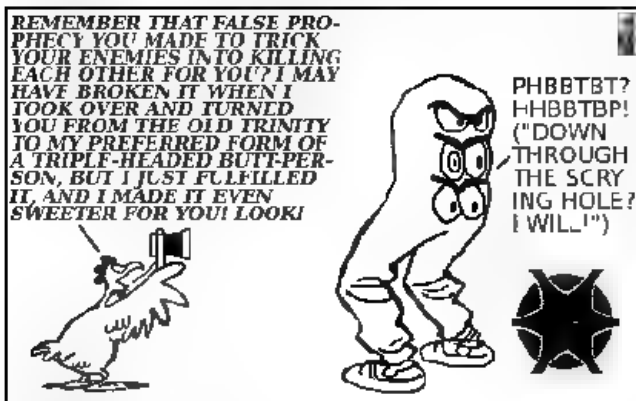
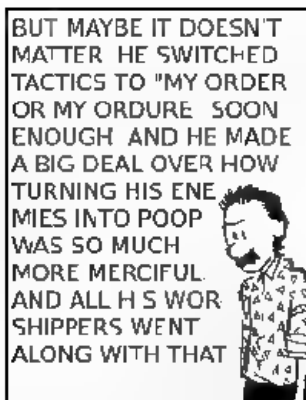
YES, THAT FITS!



ONE OF THESE YEARS, I'LL HAVE TO LEARN ROBOT SPEAK SO I CAN FULLY UNDERSTAND BRIAN!

WHEN YOU'RE OLDER, BOTH ROBOTS AND HUMANS CAN BE DEPRIVED





THE LIBRARY WAS SO BIG THAT IT WAS DIVIDED INTO SEVERAL SUB-LIBRARIES AND SOME PEOPLE EVEN HELD CLASSES THERE TO CALL IT DAUNTING WOULD BE AN UNDERSTATEMENT.



WHOA!

THERE'S SO MUCH HERE! THE HARD PART IS GOING TO BE FIGURING OUT WHICH BOOKS HAVE THE INFORMATION WE NEED! IF IT WERE EASY, THE LUMBERCHICKEN WOULD BE LONG GONE BY NOW!



THERE'S A WAY TO NARROW IT DOWN SEARCH FOR ANYTHING FLAGGED AS CENSORED BY THE H.C.A.V., THE HERO PHANTAS FOR THE CHICKEN AGAINST VIOLENCE IT'S STILL A BROAD CATEGORY BUT IT SHOULD GET THE CLOSEST TO WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR

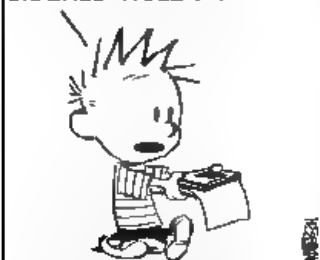


THE H.C.A.V. SOUNDS FAMILIAR, BUT I DON'T KNOW THAT MUCH ABOUT IT

ANOTHER RELIC OF THE EARLY DAYS OF THE CHICKEN FIND SOME BOOKS, AND I'LL SHOW YOU



HERE ARE A FEW A BOOK OF BABY NAMES AND A BOOK OF MOVIE QUOTES! BUT WHY ARE THOSE CONSIDERED VIOLENT?



THE CHICKEN WAS PARANOID ABOUT IT IN THE BEGINNING HE FOUND ENOUGH SUPPORTERS IN HIGH PLACES THAT HE WAS ABLE TO MAKE EVERYTHING HE DID LEGAL FOR HIM AND ANYONE IN HIS INNER CIRCLE, AND ILLEGAL FOR ANYONE ELSE



WHEN THERE WERE NO LEGAL MEANS FOR SOME PEOPLE TO GET WHAT THEY NEEDED, SOME OF THEM TURNED TO ILLEGAL MEANS BECAUSE IT WAS ALL THEY HAD I'M NOT SAYING IT'S RIGHT, BUT IN THAT RIGGED SYSTEM, SOMETHING WAS BOUND TO BREAK



SO HE WAS STILL DOING THE "SOME FAVORED AND LOTS OF DISFAVORED" THING YOU TALKED ABOUT, EVEN THEN?

RIGHT. THAT WAS ALWAYS HIS THING ONLY HIS METHODS CHANGED



ANYONE OPPOSING THE CHICKEN GOT CENSORED FOR ANY SPEECH THAT MIGHT REMOTELY BE CONSIDERED VIOLENT, WHILE ANYONE FAVORING THE CHICKEN COULD GET AWAY WITH BOTH VIOLENT SPEECH AND ACTION, SO LONG AS THEY WERE ON HIS BEHALF!



WHICH IS WHY HIS ORDER OF RELIGIOUS CENSORS, THE H.C.A.V., WAS USUALLY UNABBREVIATED AS "HYPOCRITES, ADVANCED BY THOSE IN THE OUT-GROUP

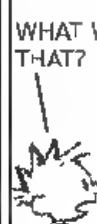


SERIOUSLY, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW DEEP THEIR CENSORSHIP WENT!

OR MAYBE YOU DO DID ANYONE IN YOUR SCHOOL SUDDENLY HAVE TO CHANGE NAMES?



THERE WAS A LUNA SELENE WHO HAD TO START GOING BY "MOON MOON" INSTEAD!



RIGHT, THE EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL MINE TELEPORTATION INCIDENT WITH THE TWINS



WHAT WAS THAT?

WHILE THE CHICKEN CONSOLIDATED HIS POWER, HE GOT RID OF MOST OF HIS OPPOSITION BY DEPORTING THEM TO MINES IN ONE OF THE DIMENSIONS HE'D TRAVELED THROUGH TO GET TO THIS ONE HE HAD WILLING HUMAN OVERSEERS WHO COULD TELEPORT ANYONE THERE ON A WHIM, USING A HAND-HELD DEVICE HE PROVIDED



LUNA AND SELENE WERE A SET OF TWINS WHO SURPRISED AN OVERSEER WHO'D SENT THEIR FRIENDS TO THE MINES, OVERPOWERED HIM AND USED HIS DEVICE ON HIM. AND SINCE HIS DEVICE HAD TO BE CALIBRATED PROPERLY TO SEND TARGETS TO THE RIGHT LOCATION, AND THEY DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO DO THAT



HE MATERIALIZED IN SOLID ROCK, DIED INSTANTLY, AND THE TWINS NAMES WERE ADDED TO THE "POTENTIAL VIOLENCE" LIST, JUST BEFORE THEY WERE EXECUTED. SO MUCH HYPE ABOUT HOW THE OVERSEER HAD A FAMILY, BUT NOTHING ABOUT ALL THE FAMILIES HE'D DESTROYED



HUH

IT WAS LEGALLY DOCUMENTED AS TWO FAKE HUMANS KILLING A REAL HUMAN, WHICH IS WHY IT TURNED OUT LIKE THAT



EXACTLY!



AND ALL THIS TIME I THOUGHT IT WAS BECAUSE "MOON MOON" HAD SUNG THAT SONG "THE HANDS ON THE PHALLUS GO UP AND DOWN" EARLIER THAT DAY! A PHALLUS IS A TYPE OF GUN, RIGHT?



OH NO BUT IT'S STILL INAPPROPRIATE

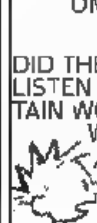
LEAVING ASIDE WHAT SOME PEOPLE CAN DO TO THE WHEELS ON THE BJS GO ROUND AND ROUND, THE ANTI VIOLENCE CENSORSHIP APPLIED TO MORE THAN JUST NAMES MOVIE QUOTES, SONG LYRICS ANYTHING THAT COULD BE USED THAT WAY WAS INTERPRETED THAT WAY TO GET RID OF ANY OPPOSITION



WAS WARNED ONCE. IT WAS IN COLLEGE AFTER THE BAND INCIDENT IN ONE CLASS, IF YOU WERE LATE, YOU HAD TO SING IT WAS IN THE SYLLABUS, AND I WAS LATE



SOUNDS COOL! WHAT SONG DID YOU PICK?




"KUNG FU FIGHTING" WASN'T GOING TO ACTUALLY FIGHT ANYONE, BUT THE H.C.A.V. DIDN'T CARE I'M LUCKY I ONLY DREW THEIR ATTENTION ONCE!



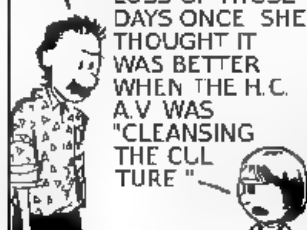
DID THEY JUST LISTEN FOR CERTAIN WORDS, OR WHAT?

APPARENTLY, BUT THEIR WORD WAS LAW, SO IT DIDN'T MATTER HOW MANY FALSE POSITIVES THEY GOT. IT WAS ABOUT CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE OF FEAR OF THE CHICKEN.

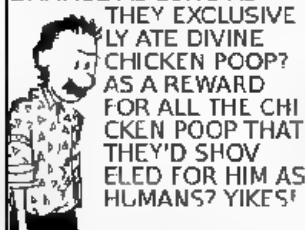
COULDN'T HE USE HIS ARMY OF BUTT PEOPLE FOR THAT?



IT WAS THE REALLY EARLY DAYS OF THE CHICKEN'S REIGN. HE HADN'T MADE THEM YET. MY COUSIN BE MOANED THE LOSS OF THOSE DAYS ONCE SHE THOUGHT IT WAS BETTER WHEN THE H.C.A.V. WAS "CLEANSING THE CULTURE."



EVEN WHEN THE CHICKEN EMPOWERED THEM BY TURNING THEM INTO HIPPO-CHICKEN HYBRIDS THAT WERE SUPER STRONG AND IMMUNE TO DAMAGE AS LONG AS THEY EXCLUSIVELY ATE DIVINE CHICKEN POOP? AS A REWARD FOR ALL THE CHICKEN POOP THAT THEY'D SHOVELLED FOR HIM AS HUMANS? YIKES!



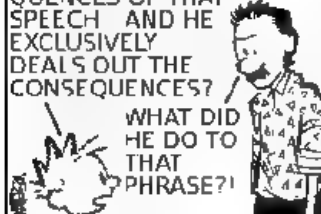
SARANNA: YES. I NEVER UNDERSTOOD MY COUSIN, AND YUK! MAX, AT LEAST THEY DIDN'T LAST LONG, SINCE IN SOME WAYS THEY WERE STRONGER THAN THE BUTT ARMY.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS WHAT THE CHICKEN SAYS IT IS! MORE POOP!




SO IT'S LIKE DAD'S FREEDOM OF SPEECH, WHERE "FREEDOM OF SPEECH DOESN'T MEAN FREEDOM FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT SPEECH" AND HE EXCLUSIVELY DEALS OUT THE CONSEQUENCES?

WHAT DID HE DO TO THAT PHRASE?



AS LONG AS I NEVER SAY ANYTHING HE DOESN'T LIKE, HE WON'T PUNISH ME, AND IF I'M NOT AROUND HIM IN ORDER TO AVOID PUNISHMENT, I'M ANTISOCIAL AND A COWARD, SO I'M BAD.

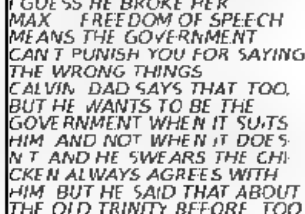
THAT'S TERRIBLE. WHAT ABOUT YOUR MOTHER?



CALVIN, HE WAS A LOT EASIER ON HER, AT LEAST BEFORE HE HAD HER TURNED INTO A BUTT PERSON. ALTHOUGH WHEN HE'D SAY THAT "SOCIETY STARTED GOING DOWNHILL WHEN WE STARTED LETTING WOMEN VOTE," SHE'D AGREE WITH HIM TO HIS FACE AND DISAGREE WITH HIM BEHIND HIS BACK, SO I GUESS HE BROKE HER.

MAX: FREEDOM OF SPEECH MEANS THE GOVERNMENT CAN'T PUNISH YOU FOR SAYING THE WRONG THINGS.

CALVIN: DAD SAYS THAT TOO, BUT HE WANTS TO BE THE GOVERNMENT WHEN IT SUITS HIM AND NOT WHEN IT DOESN'T. AND HE SWEARS THE CHICKEN ALWAYS AGREES WITH HIM, BUT HE SAID THAT ABOUT THE OLD TRINITY BEFORE, TOO.



BUT TO REALLY ANSWER YOUR QUESTION, MOM WOULD OPPOSE DAD SOMETIMES, BUT NOT OFTEN, AND NOT ENOUGH TO ACTUALLY MATTER MUCH.

IT'S A WONDER YOU TURNED OUT WELL AT ALL!




YOU COULD SAY THE SAME ABOUT ME! AT LEAST I WASN'T THE ONLY HUMAN THE GOBLINS TOOK IN, SO THEY HAD SOME IDEA OF HOW TO HELP ME!

THAT'S GOOD, SINCE NEITHER OF YOU DESERVED IT!



SO BEFORE WE KNUCKLE DOWN AND DO SOME RESEARCH, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE H.C.A.V. HIPPO-CHICKENS?

THE CHICKEN GOT TIRED OF POOP FOR ONCE, OR AT LEAST OF PRODUCING IT FOR OTHERS.



MAX: HE FINALLY SWAPPED IT FOR ORDINARY CHICKEN POOP THAT HE POISONED. THEY COULDN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE, ATE IT, AND DIED.

CENSORSHIP IS LIFE!

HERE IS A GIFT FOR YOU FROM THE CHICKEN! MAY IT KEEP YOU STRONG! (HMPH!)




AFTER THAT, HE STARTED TURNING PEOPLE INTO BUTT PEOPLE TO SERVE HIM, AND TURNING GODS INTO POOP, AND MAKING HIS BIZARRE COMMANDMENTS ALL THE FAMILY STUFF AND MAKING THE OLD TRINITY A TRIPLE BUTT PERSON?




RIGHT. HE DID THAT LAST. AND IF YOU'RE WONDERING WHICH ONE OF THE THREE HEADS HE USES FOR BRAINWASHING, IT'S THE HOLY FART SPIRIT'S, IN THE MIDDLE. AN UNFORTUNATE (AND DEAD) WITNESS TOLD ME.

EESH!



THE CHICKEN'S CENSORSHIP GOES ON TODAY, BUT HE DOES IT PERSONALLY, WITHOUT ANYONE ELSE IN THE WAY. THE ONLY TRACE OF HOW HE DID THINGS IN THE EARLY DAYS IS ORDERING HIS ARMY TO KILL BY TELLING THEM TO "MOON" A TARGET, WHICH IS WHY SHE GOT HER NAME BACK!



YES, TELLING THE BUTT ARMY TO "MOON" A TARGET WOULD BE JUST TOO JUVENILE, BUT SAYING IT TWICE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE IN THE CHICKEN'S MIND!


THAT IS RIDICULOUS!

WHAT A MIND!



IT'S ALSO WHY HE MADE THOSE FOUR DOCTORS DEMIGODS AND GAVE THEM NEW NAMES, TO MAKE IT HARDER FOR ANYONE ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR MANY, MANY VICTIMS TO STOP THEM, SINCE EVERYTHING THE BIG FOUR DID WAS LEGAL, TOO.

UNTIL HE TURNED ON THEM HIMSELF!



ONE LAST THING, REGARDING CLEAR-FRIED CHICKEN DAY: IS THE SHIELD GOING TO FALL WHEN THE CHICKEN GOES DOWN?

NO ONE KNOWS, BUT THE COUNCIL HAS CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR THAT.




AND WITH THAT, WE STARTED DIGGING FOR INFORMATION.

ONE OF THE BOOKS IN THE DUNGEON LIBRARY WAS HALF-BURNED. WIZARD STARDUST'S WAYS TO DISPOSE OF ENEMIES IT'S COMPLETE HERE.




OKAY. TURN THE ENEMY INTO A GIANT VERSION OF THEIR OWN HEAD, FLY THE HEAD TO THE SPACE POCKET OF LIVING DEATH INHABITED BY THE HEADLESS GIANT KNOWN AS THE HEADLESS HEAD HUNTER... IS THERE A MAP OF SPACE HERE?



THERE'S A POSTER COVERING MOST OF THE OTHER ROOM. THE SPACE POCKET OF LIVING DEATH IS NEAR THE PLANET OF CONVENIENT MANAGEABLE DOOM, FORMERLY THE PLANET OF UNMANAGEABLE DOOM.



GOOD!




YOU'RE NOT FAZED BY HAVING TO TURN SOMEONE INTO A GIANT HEAD?

THE RIGHT KIND OF MAGIC CAN DO A LOT. THE SPACE TRAVEL PART IS THE HARD BIT.

IF PEOPLE CAN BE TURNED INTO LIVING BUTTS, I GUESS SO!

THEN THROW THE HEAD AT WHERE THE GIANT'S HEAD SHOULD BE, AND HE'LL ABSORB AND KILL IT. THEN FUSE ALL THE ENEMY'S FOLLOWERS INTO ONE PERSON AND DESTROY GRAVITY FOR THEM SO THEY FLY INTO SPACE AND DIE, TOO.





YOUR SARANNA VISION DID SAY YOU HAD TO GO INTO SPACE, BUT THAT SEEMS LIKE A LOT TO DO. AND WHAT'S UP WITH THE WIZARD'S HAVING SUCH A BULKED UP BODY AND SUCH A TINY HEAD IN THE AUTHOR PICTURE?

HE'S LIKELY NOT ACTUALLY A HUMAN.






BUT HE DISGUISES HIMSELF AS ONE TO NOT SCARE PEOPLE, LIKE THE CEL DINOS USED TO?

RIGHT. STRIKING FEAR INTO EVIL DOERS IS HIS THING. WHEN HE DECIDES TO INTERVENE, BUT I DON'T KNOW IF HE'S STILL ALIVE.

BUT THE PROPHECY ISN'T ABOUT HIM, EVEN IF WE USE ONE OF HIS METHODS.

RIGHT. AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT REALITY HE'S FROM, CONSIDERING THAT MARS GETS SET ON FIRE, HURLED AT EARTH, AND THEN PUT BACK IN ANOTHER OF HIS ACCOUNTS.





YES, AN ENTIRE PLANET SET ON FIRE AND THROWN AROUND WOULD HAVE GOTTEN ON THE NEWS! AND IF IT HAPPENED HERE, MAYBE IT COULD HAVE TAKEN OUT THE ARCHON OF MARS IF THE FIRE WAS STRONG ENOUGH! BUT THAT'S NOT THIS REALITY. WHAT DOES YOUR VISION SAY ABOUT THE PLAN?




LET'S SEE. THERE IS A HEADLESS HEADHUNTER IN THIS REALITY BUT HIS POWERS WORK AS DESCRIBED ONLY ON MORTALS. THE CHICKEN GOD'S HEAD WOULD MELD WITH HIS BODY AND TAKE IT OVER INSTEAD OF BEING ABSORBED. THE BUTT ARMY WOULD NOT BE STOPPED BY BEING FUSED AND LOSING GRAVITY, SINCE THEY COULD USE TELEKINESIS TO COMPENSATE FOR THE LATTER. AND IF THE BUTT ARMY GOT TO THE GIANT, THEY DON'T HAVE HEADS FOR HIM TO ABSORB, AND THERE'S NO BUTTLESS BUTT-HUNTER HERE WHO COULD ABSORB THEIR BUTTS, COLLECTIVE OR FUSED. SO THAT PLAN'S A BUST.


AT LEAST WE KNOW NOW DID YOU FIND ANYTHING USEFUL?



I LOOKED MORE INTO THE EXTRADIMENSIONAL MINES THAT MAX MENTIONED, SINCE THE HAND HELD TELEPORTERS THAT TOOK PEOPLE THERE MIGHT BE USEFUL TO TAKE US OTHER PLACES THE CHICKEN MAY HAVE ABANDONED THEM, BUT SOME PEOPLE STILL LIVE THERE AND MAKE HOMES THERE!





SOME OF THE GHOSTS FROM THERE FOUND THEIR WAY BACK TO THIS REALITY, AND ONE WROTE A BOOK ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES! IT'S COOL THAT THEY FOUND A WAY TO THRIVE ON WHAT DID THEY CALL IT.. NIRIMAR. BUT THERE'S NOTHING IN THERE ABOUT TELEPORTERS AS DE FROM THEIR USE IN ABDUCTION, SO IT'S A BUST TOO!



I HOPE MAX, SUSIE, AND BRIAN HAVE HAD BETTER LUCK FINDING BOOKS WE CAN USE.

I HOPE SO, TOO, BUT THE PROPHECY DIRECTLY APPLIES TO US, SO WE HAVE TO BE THE ONES TO FIND THE GOLD NUGGETS IN THE DIRT!

CALVIN YOU SOUND LIKE THAT BOOK OF BARDIC PROVERBS I FOUND!


SARANNA. WHAT WAS IN IT?

CALVIN "THE STRONG GIVE UP AND MOVE ON, WHILE THE WEAK GIVE UP AND STAY." "IF YOU CHOOSE NOT TO DECIDE YOU STILL HAVE MADE A CHOICE." "NOTHING GIVES EASY. EASY GIVES NOTHING." STUFF LIKE THAT.

SARANNA SOUNDS LIKE SONG LYRICS IN BOOK FORM! BUT OF COURSE THE CHICKEN WOULD CENSOR WISDOM LIKE THAT IF IT DIDN'T PRAISE HIM UNCONDITIONALLY!

I TRACKED DOWN UNCLE MAX AND TOLD HIM ABOUT ALL OF THE BOOKS WE'D LOOKED INTO. SARANNA HAD GONE THROUGH SEVERAL GRIMOIRES BEFORE WIZARD STARDUST'S, AND I'D GONE THROUGH SEVERAL BOOKS ON HISTORY BEFORE THE NIRIMARIANS. WE NEEDED A DIFFERENT APPROACH.

THIS IS SUCH A FRUSTRATING SEARCH! TELL ME ABOUT THE GODS YOU'VE WORKED WITH. MAYBE IT'LL GIVE ME SOME NEW IDEAS!




I DID AND HE GOT THE OTHERS AND CONSULTED WITH THEM.

DOES ANYONE KNOW WHAT TO DO HERE?


THE PROPHECY SPEAKS OF A GUIDE AND AN ANIMUS, WHOM WE HAVE YET TO DISCOVER AND ARE NOT OBVIOUS TO ME, GODS NOTWITHSTANDING.




I HAVE AN IDEA! WITH THE WAY EVERYONE HAS TO BE LIBERATED TO PROPERLY FIGHT THE CHICKEN. WHAT IF THE ANIMUS IS SOMETHING THAT ISN'T LIVING IN THE USUAL SENSE? I JUST KEEP THINKING OF MY OLD STUFFED RABBIT MR. BUN, AND HOW HE AND I HAD SO MANY ADVENTURES TOGETHER BEFORE I LOST HIM WHEN WE MOVED!



IMAGINATION COUNTS AS ANOTHER FORM OF ANIMISM! SARANNA WOULD N'T THINK OF IT OFFHAND BECAUSE OUR COUSIN TRIED TO STOMP IMAGINATION OUT OF HER FOR YEARS! THE GOBLINS LET HER USE IT, BUT HER APTITUDE FOR MAGIC IS HAMPED BY THE TIME SHE SPENT SUPPRESSING IT! THE PROPHECY WON'T WAIT!



SHE TRIED TO STOMP IMAGINATION OUT OF A KID? SAINT URFLENZAK'S WHEELS! WHY WOULD SHE DO THAT?!

I SOON LEARNED URFLENZAK WAS A SAINT OF THE UNJUSTLY DISABLED WHO ORIGINATED IN ANOTHER REALITY. SHE WAS VENERATED A LOT AFTER THE CHICKEN'S DEFEAT.




SHE FIGURED SARANNA'S ONLY REAL PURPOSE WAS TO MAKE YOLKS FOR THE CHICKEN, AND SHE WOULDN'T NEED IMAGINATION THEN.

YET ANOTHER REASON TO TAKE THE CHICKEN DOWN! CALVIN, DID MY BROTHER DO THAT TO YOU?



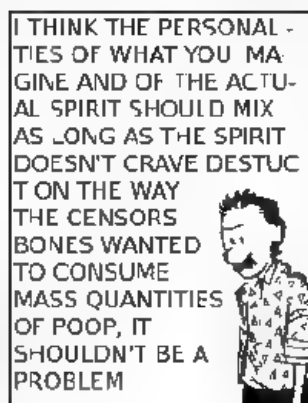
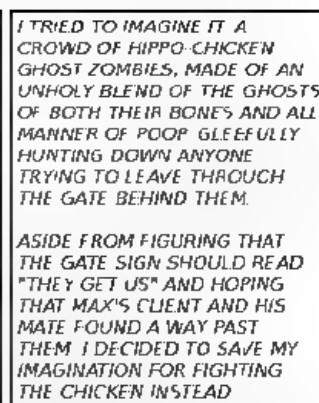
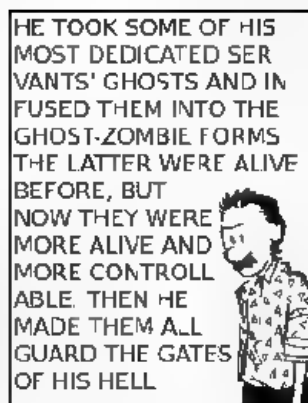
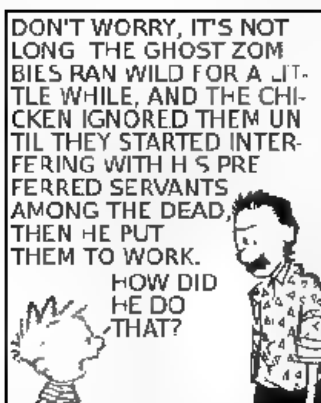
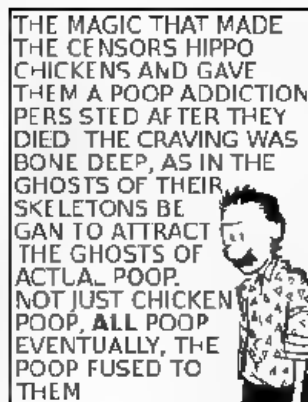
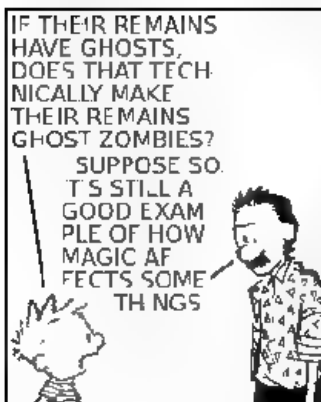
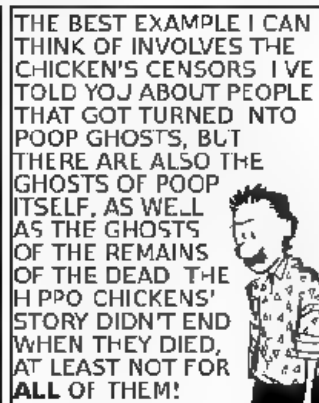
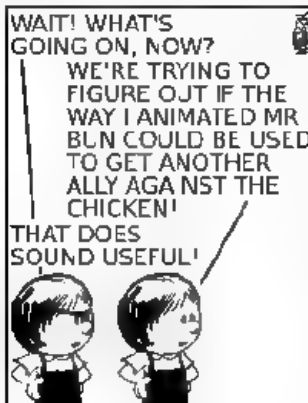

YOU MEAN AFTER YOUR LAST VISIT? NO. HE TOLERATES IT, BUT HE'S SAID THAT I'LL HAVE TO GIVE IT UP WHEN I'M OLDER, AS PART OF MY "PUTTING AWAY CHILDISH THINGS."

ONLY BECAUSE HE DOESN'T SEE YOU AS BREEDING STOCK!




BUT TO GET BACK TO THE ISSUE AT HAND, SUSIE DOES HAVE A GOOD POINT. I SHOULD HAVE MENTIONED IT EARLIER, BUT I HAD SO MUCH TO TELL ALREADY! IMAGINATION AND MAGIC COMBINED ARE THE KEY TO THE KIND OF ANIMISM THAT MAY WELL BE WHAT THE ANIMUS NEEDS.





HE IS EITHER IN THE LIVING WORLD OR IN THE GHOST REALM WHERE YOU ARE, DEPENDING ON WHETHER HE WAS DESTROYED OR NOT. A SIMPLE SUMMONING SPELL WILL CALL HIM TO YOU, EITHER WAY.

SO WE NEED TO LOOK ONE OF THOSE SPELLS UP?



ZAR'NA SHOULD KNOW IT ALREADY, FROM HER STUDIES IN THE DUNGEON LIBRARY.

WHO'S THAT? ANOTHER GOBLIN?



THE SHAMAN MEANS ME THAT'S MY HONORARY GOBLIN NAME THANK YOU, SHAMAN FOR YOUR KNOWLEDGE

THAT'S WHY ERIS TRIED TO TELL ME ABOUT THINGS YOU'D LOOKED UP!



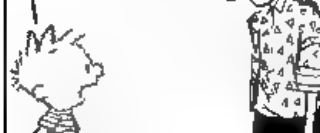
MAY IT SERVE YOU WELL, ZAR'NA. THE WARRIOR SPIRIT YOU NEED, YOU WILL HAVE TO FIND ON YOUR OWN MY INTERVENTION MUST BE MINIMAL SO AS TO NOT BEND THE PROPHECY IN UNDESIRABLE WAYS AS YOU HUMANS SAY, GOOD LUCK TO YOU, AND FAREWELL

AND WITH THAT HIS IMAGE FADED WE WERE ON OUR OWN AGAIN.



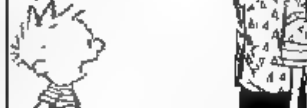
AT LEAST NOW WE REALLY KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR! IT'S JUST A MATTER OF CALLING UPON THE RIGHT WARRIOR SPIRIT!

WE ALSO HAVE TO MAKE SURE IT'S ON THE RIGHT SIDE!



SHOULDN'T OPPOSING THE CHICKEN BE ENOUGH?

COMMON ENEMIES DON'T ALWAYS MAKE FRIENDS THE CHICKEN HAD ONE GROUP LIKE THAT WHO RIVALED HIM

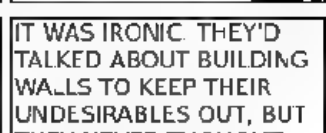


I REMEMBER ENOUGH OF THE SUMMONING SPELL THAT I CAN USE IT, BUT YOU HAVE TO TELL ME ENOUGH ABOUT HOBBS FIRST

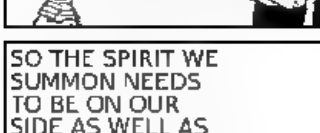
CAN DO BUT WHO RIVALED THE CHICKEN OTHER THAN THE OLD TRINITY?



ANOTHER TOTALITARIAN GOVERNMENT OBSESSED WITH WIPING OUT ALL UNDESIRABLES THE CHICKEN DESPISED THEM FOR RIVALING HIM, BUT HE ADAPTED A LOT OF THEIR TERMINOLOGY AND MINDSET HE DIDN'T TAKE THEIR METHODS, BUT ONLY BECAUSE HE PREFERRED HIS OWN!



I'M NOT SURE WHAT YOU MEAN HIS DOCTORS' CALLING PATIENTS WHO COULDN'T WORK "USELESS EATERS," HIS BELIEF IN THE PURITY AND SUPREMACY OF HIS OWN FOLLOWERS ABOVE ALL OTHERS, HIS CLAIMING OWNERSHIP OF NUMBERS, AND SO ON

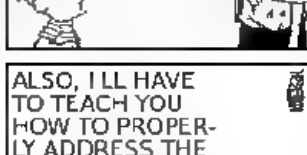


THE CHICKWHISTLES WERE THE IDEA?

THEY CALLED THEM DOG WHISTLES, BUT YES.

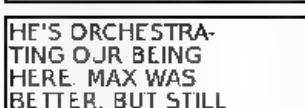
THERE WAS A PICTURE IN ONE OF MY TEXTBOOKS AT SCHOOL I NEVER UNDERSTOOD

WHAT WAS IT?



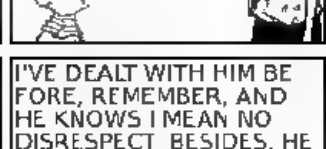
CALVIN IT WAS A BUNCH OF PEOPLE IN WEIRD MILITARY-LOOKING OUTFITS, WITH A BLURRED PICTURE OF THE CHICKEN SWINGING HIS AXE AT THEM ACCORDING TO THE CAPTION, HE WAS CHOPPING EACH OF THEM UP INTO EXACTLY ONE THOUSAND, FOUR HUNDRED EIGHTY-EIGHT PIECES EACH WHILE SCREAMING, "IT'S MINE NOW!"

MAX THAT WAS THEM, AND THAT NUMBER WAS ONE OF THEIR DOG WHISTLES HE TURNED ALL THEIR PIECES INTO CONCRETE THAT HE USED TO MAKE THE WALLS AROUND HIS HELL, AND THEY'RE ALL STUCK LIKE THAT UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING BUT SILENTLY RADIATE THEIR COLLECTIVE EVIL AURA.



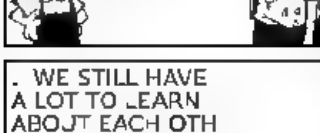
IT WAS IRONIC. THEY'D TALKED ABOUT BUILDING WALLS TO KEEP THEIR UNDESIRABLES OUT, BUT THEY NEVER THOUGHT THEIR BODIES AND SOULS WOULD BECOME A WALL TO KEEP THE CHICKEN'S UNDESIRABLES IN!

IT SERVES THEM RIGHT!



SO THE SPIRIT WE SUMMON NEEDS TO BE ON OUR SIDE AS WELL AS AGAINST THE CHICKEN GOD'S SIDE. I GET IT

WE'LL ALSO HAVE TO FIND AN EMPTY ROOM TO SUMMON IT NOT HERE



ALSO, I'LL HAVE TO TEACH YOU HOW TO PROPERLY ADDRESS THE SHAMAN YOU WEREN'T BAD BUT YOU NEED TO BE BETTER.

WHY? I'M NOT AN ADOPTED GOBLIN OR GREMLIN OR WHATEVER!

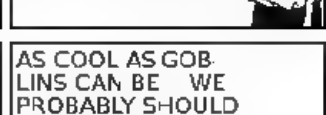


HE'S ORCHESTRATING OUR BEING HERE. MAX WAS BETTER, BUT STILL NOT PERFECT

I USED HIS PROPER TITLE! HE ALSO NEEDS THE PROPER HONORIFICS!



I'VE DEALT WITH HIM BEFORE, REMEMBER, AND HE KNOWS I MEAN NO DISRESPECT BESIDES, HE SHOULD LEARN THAT NOT ALL HUMANS BELIEVE IN LUCK! AMITABHA AND HIS BROTHERS SAY EVERYTHING HAS A CAUSE, AND THE TIGHMANITES SAY THERE'S ONLY THE DIVINE MADNESS! NEITHER OF THEM BELIEVE IN LUCK AT ALL!



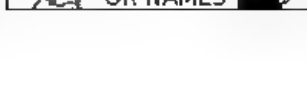
WE STILL HAVE A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT EACH OTHER. IT'S JUST, AFTER THE GOBLINS WERE ENSLAVED, SO MANY NON GOBLINS DON'T KNOW THEIR WAYS AT ALL, AND

THEY DESERVE BETTER. RIGHT!



AND THEY'LL GET BETTER AS SOON AS WE TAKE THE CHICKEN DOWN! WHAT WOULD YOU CALL THE TRATOR SHAMAN, THOUGH?

GHIMZUROS? HE'S GHIMZUROS MAY HIS NAME LIVE IN INFAMY ZURLINGS WHO FOLLOWS HIM GET NO HONORIFICS OR NAMES



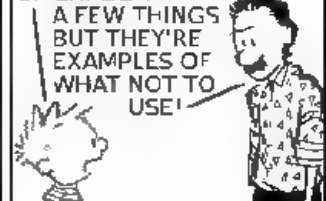
THAT'S AWFULLY LONG! WHY NOT POOP HEAD GHIMZUROS, GIVEN HIS MASTER THE CHICKEN'S FASCINATION WITH IT?

CAN WE GET BACK TO RESEARCHING?



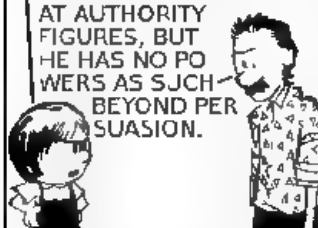
AS COOL AS GOBLINS CAN BE WE PROBABLY SHOULD DID YOU FIND ANYTHING INTERESTING WHILE WE WERE LOOKING STUFF UP EARLIER?

A FEW THINGS BUT THEY'RE EXAMPLES OF WHAT NOT TO USE!




LIKE WHAT?

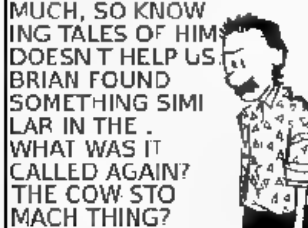
LOOKED UP WHAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE AN ANCIENT TIBETAN WISDOM AND FOUND JNCLTOMPA. HE'S NOT BAD IF YOU'RE AIMING HIM AT AUTHORITY FIGURES, BUT HE HAS NO POWERS AS SUCH BEYOND PERSUASION.



HE ONCE DROPPED POOP IN HIS KINGS LAP AND THEN CONVINCED HIM THAT IT WAS MAGICAL POOP FROM HEAVEN THAT WOULD GIVE HIM THE BEST LUCK EVER IF HE ATE PART OF IT, AND THE ONLY TIME HE REALLY HELPED ANYONE OTHER THAN HIMSELF WAS AN INCIDENT WHERE SOME CROPS GOT TRANSFORMED



INTO SOME NON-EDIBLE THINGS, AND HE SOLD THEM TO A BUNCH OF NUNS TO GET THE CROP FARMERS THEIR MONEY BACK AND MORE. HE ALSO DOESN'T LEAVE TIBET MUCH, SO KNOWING TALES OF HIM DOESN'T HELP US. BRIAN FOUND SOMETHING SIMILAR IN THE... WHAT WAS IT CALLED AGAIN? THE COW STOMACH THING?



AND SORRY IF I'M GETTING SNIPPY, BUT I CAN ONLY HANDLE SO MUCH RESEARCH AT ONE TIME, AND I WANT TO GET THIS OVER WITH.

SAME HERE. I'D BE RUNNING AROUND OUTSIDE RIGHT NOW IF IT WAS AN OPTION!



THE CREATURE I FOUND WAS THE BUTATSCHE CUNILGS, A GIANT COW STOMACH COVERED IN EYEBALLS THAT CAN EITHER HYPNOTIZE OTHERS OR SHOOT BEAMS OF FIRE CAPABLE OF MELTING ROCK. IT IS STRONG ENOUGH TO GOUGE ITS WAY THROUGH SOLID ROCK, AND IT HAS A DISTINCTIVE ROAR. IT IS FROM THE CENTER OF THE EARTH JUST BELOW SWITZERLAND. OFFICIAL RECORDS ONLY MENTION ONE, BUT I WAS ABLE TO DECRYPT UNOFFICIAL RECORDS OF MORE.



THE OTHERS ARE USED AS GUARDS FOR TOP-SECRET MAGICAL ARTIFACTS IN SWITZERLAND, AND MAGICALLY BOUND TO BE SUCH. EVEN IF THE SPIRIT OF ONE WAS WILLING TO HELP US, IT WOULD BE UNETHICAL THAT NOT BE FREE TO DO SO.

THE ARTIFACTS ARE SO IMPORTANT THAT THE GHOSTS OF DEAD B.C.I.'S ARE STILL BOUND TO SERVICE.



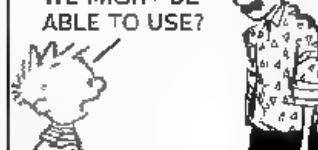
IT'S A GOOD THING YOUR GFT FOR LANGUAGES HELPS YOU PRONOUNCE THAT NAME! ALSO, A MENTIONING OF A STUFFED TIGER AND THAT WOULD BE UNPREDICTABLE!

BUT REALLY COOL IN A GROSS WAY!

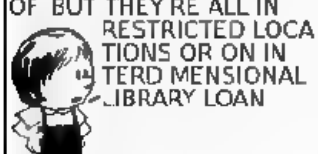


SO SOME OF US WERE ON THE RIGHT TRACK EVEN BEFORE WE KNEW WHAT WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE LOOKING FOR, WHICH DOES HELP.

SUSIE, DID YOU FIND ANYTHING WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO USE?



I FIGURED I'D LOOK INTO BOOK-BASED SOLUTIONS, SINCE WE'RE IN A LIBRARY. THE CHICKEN DIDN'T JUST BURN ORDINARY BOOKS, HE ALSO BURNED AGRIPPAS MASSIVE LIVING BOOKS THAT YOU HAVE TO LITERALLY FIGHT TO GET INFORMATION OUT OF, BUT THEY'RE ALL IN RESTRICTED LOCATIONS OR ON INTERDIMENSIONAL LIBRARY LOAN.

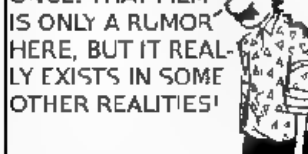


AND SOME OF THE AGRIPPAS MIGHT WANT REVENGE ON THE CHICKEN, SO GOOD THINKING. BUT GETTING ONE VIA INTERDIMENSIONAL LIBRARY LOAN WILL LIKELY TAKE GODS KNOW HOW LONG!

WHAT'S THAT?

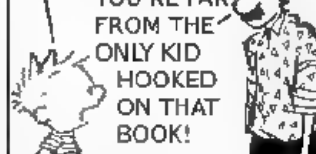


CHECKING OUT MEDIA FROM OTHER REALITIES, ESPECIALLY FOR THINGS THAT DON'T EXIST IN YOUR OWN. I KNOW HOW LONG IT TAKES BECAUSE I WANTED TO SEE "GONCHAROV" ONCE. THAT FILM IS ONLY A RUMOR HERE, BUT IT REALLY EXISTS IN SOME OTHER REALITIES!




IT MAKES ME WONDER HOW MANY DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF "HAMSTER HUEY AND THE GODEY KABLOOEY" THERE ARE IN THE MULTIVERSE!

TOO MANY. YOU'RE FAR FROM THE ONLY KID HOOKED ON THAT BOOK!



AND SPEAKING OF THE MULTIVERSE, WERE YOUR EVIL GODS EVER DEFEATED, BRIAN, OR ARE THEY STILL DOING DAMAGE IN WHAT'S LEFT OF YOUR ORIGINAL REALITY?

DRAINING THE SPIRITUAL ENERGY OF THEIR REALITY SHOULD HAVE KILLED AT LEAST SOME OF THEM AND WEAKENED OTHERS.



THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ADAPT, BUT I DO NOT KNOW FOR CERTAIN. IN ANY CASE, THE COLLATERAL DAMAGE FROM DOING SUCH A THING TO ANY REALITY IS TOO HIGH A PRICE.

ALL OF HIS GODS PAID THAT PRICE, TOO!



INDEED, IT MAY ALSO HAVE FREED SOME UNJUSTLY IMPRISONED BY OUR EVIL GODS. BAD FORTUNE CAN CHANGE QUICKLY, OR AS ONE OF OUR PROVERBS PUTS IT, 3775658849703405893-2415148243740437842-3077295819805548675-1648333197298053285-2075543649334599496-4275937700239317145-2818541818906684654-3880683278093515881-4535141815908843937, WHATEVER POWERS ARE WILLING.



WE HAVE A PROPHECY ON OUR SIDE, SO THAT POWER'S WILLING! IT'S NOT JUST HOPING FOR THE BEST!

BUT WHAT DO WE DO TO FIND THE SPIRIT WE NEED?




YOU'D THINK WE'D HAVE FOUND SOMETHING CLOSE TO IT WITH THE GODS AND PROPHECY HELPING! I KNOW THEY'RE NOT ALL STRAIGHTFORWARD, BUT IT WOULD BE NICE IF THEY'D GIVE US A HINT!

WHAT ISN'T THAT A SLIP OF THE TONGUE?



ERIS! RIGHT! IF THERE WAS A TIME I NEEDED HER GUIDANCE, IT'D BE NOW! IT'S COOL TO LEARN ABOUT THE BIGGER WORLD OUT THERE, BUT WE HAVE CHICKEN TO FRY!

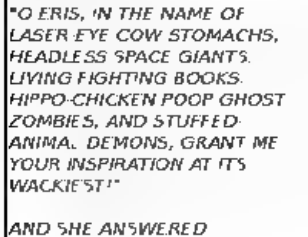
IS THERE A MEDITATION TECHNIQUE OR SOME THING YOU USE TO TALK TO HER?



THERE WAS A WAY OF CHANNELING MY INNER WEIRDNESS, AND THE RESEARCH WE'D DONE HAD HELPED. I STILL REMEMBER HOW I STARTED THE CHANNELING.

"O ERIS, IN THE NAME OF LASER EYE COW STOMACHS, HEADLESS SPACE GIANTS, LIVING FIGHTING BOOKS, HIPPO-CHICKEN POOP GHOST ZOMBIES, AND STUFFED ANIMAL DEMONS, GRANT ME YOUR INSPIRATION AT IT'S WACKIEST!"

AND SHE ANSWERED



SHE SAYS, "TAKE THE FIFTH, AND HAVE A ONE-EYED WINTER." SO... STUFFED ANIMAL DEMONS ARE THE KEY?

ALONG WITH SNOW DEMONS, IT SOUNDS LIKE!





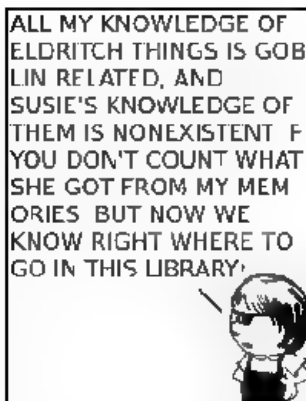
SHE ALSO SAYS, "EAT A WALL BURGER! IT'S ON ME!" I GUESS MY EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL AUNT WAL BURGA'S ELDRITCH TALENTS APPLY TO ME, TOO?

THAT'D BE MY GUESS!



THE ONLY STUFF I'VE HEARD ABOUT ELDRITCH THINGS ARE SARANNA'S COMMENTS ON GOBLINS WHO DEAL WITH OTHER POWERS. BUT I SUPPOSE THERE'S MORE TO THEM?

YES. WE DEFINITELY NEED TO KNOW MORE!



ALL MY KNOWLEDGE OF ELDRITCH THINGS IS GOBLIN RELATED, AND SUSIE'S KNOWLEDGE OF THEM IS NONEXISTENT. IF YOU DON'T COUNT WHAT SHE GOT FROM MY MEMORIES, BUT NOW WE KNOW RIGHT WHERE TO GO IN THIS LIBRARY.



IT WAS FORTUNATE THAT THE POOP-RELATED RESEARCH DIDN'T PAN OUT, SINCE I DIDN'T TRUST ANYTHING THE CHICKEN WAS OBSESSED WITH. UNCLE TOMPA SEEMED UNRELIABLE. ANOTHER BOOK I'D READ HERE WAS ABOUT AN EARLY PRO-CHICKEN MOVEMENT WHERE A BUNCH OF PEOPLE BROKE INTO A GOVERNMENT BUILDING AND MURDERED ANYONE WHO TRIED TO STOP THEM. A FEW POOPED ON THE FLOOR TO GET THE CHICKEN'S FAVOR, BUT THEY WERE ALL ARRESTED. AND WHEN THE CHICKEN FREED THEM TO MAKE HIMSELF LOOK GOOD, MOST OF THEM GOT LOCKED UP AGAIN FOR OTHER CRIMES DUE TO LACK OF SELF CONTROL. AS THE BOOK PUT IT, "POOP CAN'T FIX STUPID." SO... NO POOP FOR ME.



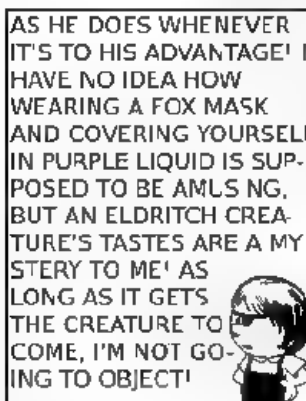
AFTER SOME MUCH MORE PRODUCTIVE RESEARCH IN THE ELDRITCH HORROR RESEARCH WING (WHO KNEW THE SUBJECT WAS POPULAR ENOUGH TO NEED AN ENTIRE WING?) WE FINALLY HAD NOTES ON THE RIGHT RITUAL, WHICH WOULD SUMMON THE KIND OF SPIRIT WE NEEDED.

SOME OF THE INSTRUCTIONS IN HERE SOUND LIKE THINGS I'VE SEEN IN MUSIC VIDEOS WHEN DAD WASN'T LOOKING!



DID YOU MISS THE END OF THE BOOK THAT TALKED ABOUT HOW SOME ELDRITCH CREATURES ARE AMUSED BY TRIPPY MUSIC VIDEOS AND SUMMON THEMSELVES FOR IMITATORS WITH THE RIGHT MINDSET?

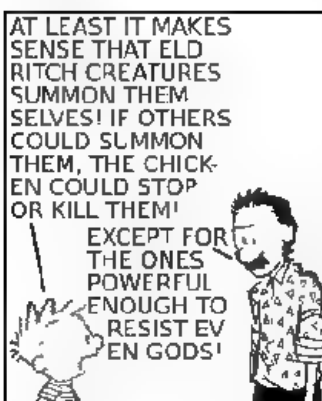
I THINK I DID! THE CHICKEN GETS IT BACKWARDS!



AS HE DOES WHENEVER IT'S TO HIS ADVANTAGE! I HAVE NO IDEA HOW WEARING A FOX MASK AND COVERING YOURSELF IN PURPLE LIQUID IS SUPPOSED TO BE AMUSING, BUT AN ELDRITCH CREATURE'S TASTES ARE A MYSTERY TO ME! AS LONG AS IT GETS THE CREATURE TO COME, I'M NOT GOING TO OBJECT!



AND MAYBE THE CREATURE JUST COMES ON ITS OWN, REGARDLESS AND ASKS, "GEEZ, I GOTTA HAVE A REASON FOR EVERYTHING?" I REMEMBER THE BOOK THAT POINTED THAT OUT, AT LEAST! WE'LL FIND OUT WHEN WE TRY SUMMONING IT!



AT LEAST IT MAKES SENSE THAT ELDRITCH CREATURES SUMMON THEMSELVES! IF OTHERS COULD SUMMON THEM, THE CHICKEN COULD STOP OR KILL THEM!

EXCEPT FOR THE ONES POWERFUL ENOUGH TO RESIST EVEN GODS!



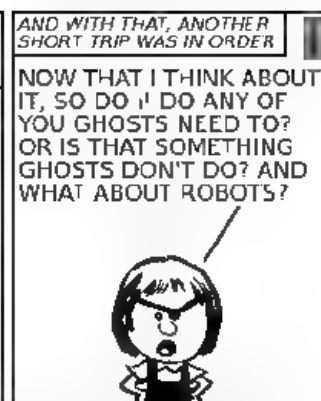
BUT WE'RE STARTING OFF SLOW. A SPIRIT CAPABLE OF MELDING WITH A STUFFED TIGER, WHICH SHOULD BE AN ORDINARY CELESTIAL, DEMON, OR FEY WHO'S TAPPED INTO SOME ELDRITCH POWER. THE CHICKEN CAN'T EASILY RESIST!

IF WE UNDERSTAND THINGS RIGHT!



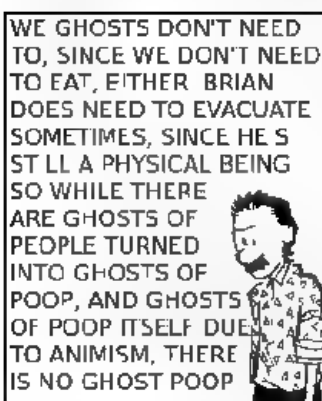
IT WAS MAKING MY HEAD SPIN, AND MY BLADDER ACHE. NO, WAIT, THAT SECOND PART WAS SOMETHING ELSE.

BEFORE WE DO THIS, DOES ANYONE ELSE HAVE TO GO? IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE MCZAR GARDEN!



AND WITH THAT, ANOTHER SHORT TRIP WAS IN ORDER.

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, SO DO I! DO ANY OF YOU GHOSTS NEED TO? OR IS THAT SOMETHING GHOSTS DON'T DO? AND WHAT ABOUT ROBOTS?



WE GHOSTS DON'T NEED TO, SINCE WE DON'T NEED TO EAT, EITHER. BRIAN DOES NEED TO EVACUATE SOMETIMES, SINCE HE STILL HAS A PHYSICAL BEING. SO WHILE THERE ARE GHOSTS OF PEOPLE TURNED INTO GHOSTS OF POOP, AND GHOSTS OF POOP ITSELF DUE TO ANIMISM, THERE IS NO GHOST POOP.



INTERESTING, IF A BIT MUCH FOR THE TIME. I HAD ONLY ONE OTHER QUESTION.

THE SAME APPLES TO PEE, THEN?

YES. OKAY, LET'S GO!



WE PASSED SOME OTHER LIBRARY PATRONS. SOME LIVING, SOME NOT, ON THE WAY THERE. THERE WERE SO MANY SPECIES.





WHICH ALSO MEANT THERE WERE SO MANY BATHROOM TYPES FOR ALL THOSE SPECIES THAT THINGS GOT DESPERATE.

I MAY AS WELL EVACUATE. ALL ONE-TYPE BATHROOMS THAT BOTH I AND YOU TWO MAMMALS COULD USE ARE TAKEN, HOWEVER.

WHAT DO WE DO, THEN?!



I WILL TRANSFORM MY ANATOMY TO MATCH ONE OF THE AVAILABLE BATHROOMS. THE FIRE ELEMENTAL-TYPE BATHROOM IS SUITABLE. RECONFIGURING TO EVACUATE PLASMA... DONE. I WILL HELP YOU BOTH AS SOON AS I FINISH.

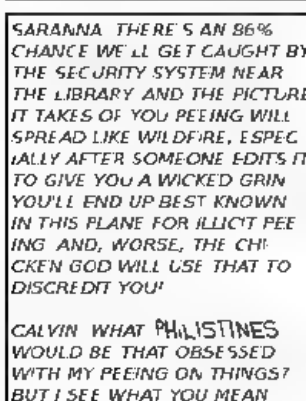


CHK CH CHK CH CH!



AN EXIT LEADING OUTSIDE IS RIGHT THERE. IF IT GETS BAD ENOUGH, COULDN'T WE JUST DUCK OUT INTO A PLACE NO ONE'S WATCHING?

MY VISION SAYS THAT'S A BAD IDEA.



SARANNA, THERE'S AN 86% CHANCE WE'LL GET CAUGHT BY THE SECURITY SYSTEM NEAR THE LIBRARY. AND THE PICTURE IT TAKES OF YOU PEEING WILL SPREAD LIKE WILDFIRE, ESPECIALLY AFTER SOMEONE EDITS IT TO GIVE YOU A WICKED GRIN. YOU'LL END UP BEING KNOWN IN THIS PLANE FOR ILLICIT PEEING. AND, WORSE, THE CHICKEN GOD WILL USE THAT TO DISCREDIT YOU!

CALVIN, WHAT PHILISTINES WOULD BE THAT OBSESSED WITH MY PEEING ON THINGS? BUT I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN.




I AM BACK. THERE IS A POSTED NOTICE OF A NEWLY OPENED TYPE OF BATHROOM: ONE FOR SANITATION HOMUNCULI, WHO ONLY EXCRETE LIQUID. IF YOU TWO WILL BE DOING JUST THAT, YOU CAN USE IT WHILE I STAND GUARD, SINCE IT IS UNOCCUPIED.

WE WERE. AND WE TOOK THAT OPTION, CURIOUSITY ABOUT SANITATION HOMUNCULI NOTWITHSTANDING.


AFTER GETTING BACK TO UNCLE MAX AND SUSIE, WE HEADED TO AN AVAILABLE EMPTY ROOM AND PUT UP A "DO NOT DISTURB" SIGN. THEN IT WAS A MATTER OF GETTING THE RIGHT MINDSET.

I THINK HAVE MY NOTES MEMORIZED BY NOW! SO WHAT DO I NEED TO DO BEFORE WE START TH S?

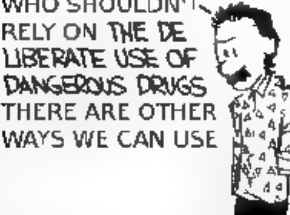


BEFORE SUMMONING HOBBS FIRST, I MEAN

MY NOTES SAY YOU NEED TO GET IN THE RIGHT STATE OF MIND THE EASIEST WAY TO DO THAT IS SOME DRUG CALLED PAIZHOG




BUT SINCE I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE STUFF OTHER THAN IT'S SOME KIND OF HALLUCINOGEN FROM ANOTHER REALITY, AND YOU'RE JUST A KID WHO SHOULDN'T RELY ON THE DE-LIBERATE USE OF DANGEROUS DRUGS THERE ARE OTHER WAYS WE CAN USE



LIKE WHAT?

SPINNING IN PLACE IN THE RIGHT WAY UNTIL YOU'RE "OPEN TO THE MYSTICISM INHERENT IN THE WORLD," AS THAT BOOK PUT IT



ACCORDING TO ERIS, I'M FORBIDDEN TO BELIEVE WHAT I READ. INSTEAD I SHOULD BELIEVE THINGS AFTER TESTING THEM. THIS WAS AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO DO THAT




THERE WAS AN ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLE SHIFT AROUND ME. I HEARD UNCLE MAX WHISPERING A PRAYER TO EBVOOT AND MY TRUE JOURNEY BEGAN.

WHEEE! HA HA HA!



EBVOOT MAY HAVE BEEN A GOD OF SMALL FAVORS, BUT MAKING SURE THIS WORKED WAS A BIG ONE


SO WITH SPIRITS, SO WITH SOLIDS! NOTHING IS TRULY LOST!



NEUGA, ZIENA, ZIEBER, ZOM! RETURN TO ME WITH GREAT APLOMB! HOBBS, I SUMMON THEE! COME FORTH!



THE WORDS HAD BEEN SPOKEN NOW FOR THE DANCE. (WITH ENOUGH SKILL, IMAGINING THE STEPS OF THE RITUAL WOULD PRODUCE THE SAME RESULT AS PHYSICALLY DOING THEM, BUT I WOULDN'T HAVE THAT LEVEL OF SKILL FOR A FEW YEARS.)



AND THEN WE WAITED FOR THE MAGIC TO BEGIN

I WISH MY COUSIN HADN'T BANNED ME FROM HAVING ANY STUFFED ANIMALS!

I KNOW! YOU CAN AT LEAST MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME!



REALITY SEEMED TO WAVER, JUST LIKE IT HAD WHEN THE GOBLINS WERE OPENING A PORTAL TO THE GHOST PLANE THEN, SUDDENLY THERE WAS AN ORANGE FLASH



YOUR SPELL WORKED! THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU



CALVIN! IT'S BEEN SO LONG! HOW MANY ADVENTURES HAVE YOU HAD?

A LOT FEWER THAN I'D LIKE! BUT YOU'RE FINALLY BACK!




AND SOON, EVERYONE ELSE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SEE YOU, TOO! THE REAL YOU!

I'M CURIOUS ABOUT THAT MYSELF!

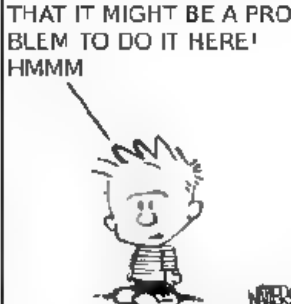


AS AM I! SUCH AN ILLOGICAL THING IS FASCINATING, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE IT WORKS!

LET'S DO MORE ILLOGIC, THEN!




ALTHOUGH THE ELDRITCH SUMMONING RITUAL WILL MAKE ENOUGH OF A MESS THAT IT MIGHT BE A PROBLEM TO DO IT HERE! HMMM



THERE ARE SOME CHANGES WE CAN MAKE TO THE SECOND RITUAL, JUST AS WE DID WITH THE FIRST ONE

THAT'S GOOD TO KNOW!

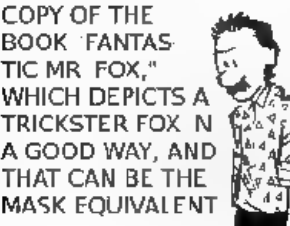


SINCE WHEN DO YOU CARE ABOUT MAKING A MESS, OR FOLLOWING RULES ABOUT THEM?

AFTER DOING THIS SUCCESSFULLY ONCE, I DON'T WANT TO GET KICKED OUT BEFORE I CAN DO IT AGAIN!




BRIAN SCANNED AN IMAGE OF A PURPLE LAVA LAMP WHILE RESEARCHING, WHICH WE CAN DISPLAY FOR THE PURPLE LIQUID PART. THERE'S A COPY OF THE BOOK "FANTASTIC MR. FOX," WHICH DEPICTS A TRICKSTER FOX IN A GOOD WAY, AND THAT CAN BE THE MASK EQUIVALENT



WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF IT?

THE HUMAN SKULL MASK AND CHAINS? YOU'RE WEARING A HUMAN SKULL MASK COVERED IN SKIN, AND YOU WEAR CHAINS THE CHICKEN PUT ON YOU!



I SHOULD HAVE BEEN CONFIDENT, SEEING AS HOW I'D JUST SUCCESSFULLY DONE MAGIC, BUT I HAD A FEW MOMENTS OF DOUBT



THIS RITUAL WAS MUCH MORE COMPLEX, AND REQUIRED MAKING A DEAL WITH WHATEVER ELDritch ENTITY WAS WILLING TO HELP

WHAT KIND OF LOON CAME UP WITH THE MUSIC VIDEO THAT INSPIRED THE RITUAL? AND WHAT PROOF DID I HAVE THAT IT WOULD WORK THE SAME WAY?

AND AS FOR MAKING DEALS, I KNEW FROM EXPERIENCE WITH DAD (AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT MOM) HOW THOSE WORKED.

DAD WOULD FIRST SAY HE'D DO SOMETHING BUT HE'D PUT IT OFF.



I DIDN'T SAY 'D DO IT' I SAID I MIGHT DO IT!

THEN HE'D TREAT IT AS LEVERAGE IF I BROUGHT UP THAT HE SAID HE'D DO IT BY A CERTAIN TIME THAT WAS GETTING AWFULLY CLOSE



TRYING TO FORCE ME? I'LL WAIT LONGER OR NOT DO IT AT ALL!

AND THEN IF HE GOT ANGRY ENOUGH (HE'D CALL IT "BEING PASSIONATE" AND A GOOD THING WHEN HE DID IT, AND CALL IT "HAVING AN ATTITUDE" AND A BAD THING IF I EVER DID IT), HE'D DROP ALL PRETENSE



I DON'T HAVE TO DO IT! HOW ABOUT F I NEVER DO IT?!

AND IF I DID EVERYTHING TO AVOID SETTING HIM OFF AND HE JUST HAPPENED TO BE IN A BAD MOOD THAT DAY, HE'D JUMP STRAIGHT TO THAT LAST STAGE, REGARDLESS

HOW MANY OTHERS WITH AUTHORITY WOULD ACT THE SAME WAY?

AND MOM'S VERSION OF ALL THAT WAS "IF YOU ASK FOR IT YOU DON'T GET IT," AFTER WHICH SHE'D JUMP TO THE LAST STAGE TOO BOTH OF THEM THOUGHT THEY HAD NO OBLIGATIONS ONLY LEVERAGE EXCEPT WHEN PEOPLE WITH AUTHORITY OVER THEM MADE THEM MEET THEIR OBLIGATIONS. UNCLE MAX'S STORY OF THE FIRST LIBERTY TOWN WAS THE SAME BEHAVIOR WRIT LARGE



CHEATED AGAIN!

THE THREAT OF FINANCIAL RUIN WAS ONE THING THAT KEPT THEM IN LINE SOMEWHAT THEY NEVER COMPLAINED ABOUT CAPITALISM THOUGH. TO DO SO WAS ANTI-CHICKEN BECAUSE HE FAVORED THE RICH SO MUCH BUT I'D OVERHEARD A FEW PEOPLE DO IT WHEN THEY THOUGHT I WASN'T LISTENING. THE QUESTION REMAINED HOW MANY WERE TRULY ON MY SIDE, AND HOW MANY WERE ONLY PRETENDING DUE TO SOME THREAT TO THEM OR SOME PRESSURE ON THEM? I'D FOUND SOME NEW FRIENDS, BUT HOW MANY WERE ACTUALLY FRIENDS? THE SAME APPLIED TO WHO EVER OR WHATEVER I CHOSE TO SUMMON.

NO. I NEEDED TO BE BRAVE ENOUGH TO AT LEAST TRY AND IT WASN'T FAIR TO CALL ANY ONE A LOON, BECAUSE MAGIC WAS CRAZY BY DEFINITION AND IT WAS SUPREMELY INSULTING TO CALL ANYONE A BIRD NAME GIVEN WHO OUR ENEMIES WERE THERE WERE EVEN CRAZIER RITUALS OUT THERE THAN THIS ONE I WAS ABOUT TO ATTEMPT.



I SUCCEEDED ONCE, AND I CAN DO IT AGAIN! GRANT ME STRENGTH!

I LEARNED SOME OF THEM YEARS LATER FROM AUNT WALBURGA'S ADOPTIVE NEPHEW JON



AUNT WALBURGA! HENCE, I AM GOING TO TAP DANCE ON THE FRONT LAWN IN MY UNDERWEAR WITH A BALLOON ANIMAL TIED TO MY HEAD AND A PINEAPPLE IN EACH HAND! AND THEN I WILL CONNECT ALL THE SPLATTERED BUGS ON MY CAR WINDSHIELD TO MAKE A PICTURE! AND FWOOBSLARK WILL APPEAR!

FROM POSING NEAR TEN DEAD OCTOPUSES TO RITUAL "SERVING THE TOILET WITH THE LIBATION OF MY DEFECATION" (THE LATTER ONLY ONCE I OVERCAME MY LUMBERCHICKEN INDUCED AVERSION TO POOP), THERE WERE SO MANY RITUALS I LEARNED AND DID. AND THIS WAS ONLY THE SECOND ONE I JUST HAD TO GET OUT OF MY HEAD AND ACTUALLY DO IT



I DON'T REMEMBER WHO I WAS ASKING FOR STRENGTH. MY NON-CHICKENIST FAMILY SUSIE AND SARANNA ANY AND ALL OF THE ENTITIES I'D WORKED WITH (MAYBE AMITABHA OR AMITAYUS WOULD MAKE AN EXCEPTION TO HIS USUAL PACIFISM, GIVEN THE MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF HARM THE CHICKEN AND HIS AGENTS WERE DOING?), BUT IT WORKED.



CALVIN? CALVIN! ...I'M READY NOW!

I JUST NEEDED A MINUTE TO PSYCH MYSELF UP AGAIN



GOOD BECAUSE WE'RE ALL READY TO SUPPORT YOU!

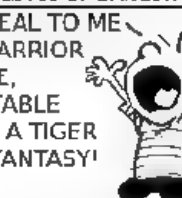
MY BEST FRIEND WOULD SOON BE VISIBLE TO EVERYONE, HE'D GET ENOUGH POWER TO HELP PUT AN END TO THE CHICKEN. AND THEN MAYBE WE COULD ALL JUST LIVE OUR LIVES NORMALLY AGAIN OR AT LEAST FOR A WHILE

I'M HERE TO SUPPORT YOU, TOO! I WISH I HADN'T BEEN AWAY SO LONG!



THAT WAS THE MOST REASSURING OF ALL!

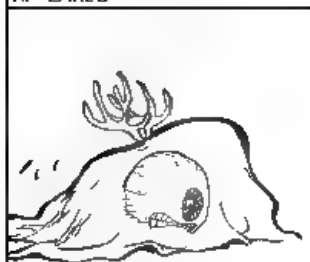
AND WITH THAT, I BEGAN THERE WAS STILL DANGER (I'D ONLY REACHED OUT TO THE FLYING SPAGHETTI MONSTER BECAUSE HE COULDN'T RANDOMLY TURN MY FOOD INTO PASTA IF I WERE DEAD AT THE CHICKEN'S HANDS, BUT ALL THE RESEARCH WE'D DONE SAID IT WOULD BE A REASONABLE LEVEL OF DANGER



REVEAL TO ME A WARRIOR FREE, SUITABLE FOR A TIGER OF FANTASY!

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO SUMMON A COMPATIBLE SPIRIT WITHOUT SPECIFYING WHO IT WAS THE NAMED ONE'S ALL SEEMED TO HAVE MAJOR PROBLEMS TAKE "SOLEGO THE CHAOS GOD, IMMORTAL MASTER OF THE WORLD" HE DIDN'T SOUND LIKE HE USED CREATIVE CHAOS AT ALL AND FOR A SO-CALLED MASTER OF THE WORLD, HE WASN'T ACTUALLY RULING IT, SO HE OBVIOUSLY HAD SOME MAJOR WEAKNESS STOPPING HIM FROM DOING SO. THIS RITUAL WAS NO MICKEY MOUSE OPERATION.

REALITY WAVERED AGAIN, AS IT HAD WHEN I'D SUMMONED HOBBS, AND A CREATURE LOOKING LIKE A BLOB WITH A TOOTHY EYEBALL AND HORNS APPEARED



IT SPOKE TELEPATHICALLY TO ME GREETINGS. YOU ARE THE PROPHECIED ONE, OR SO I HEAR.



I ANSWERED TELEPATHICALLY BUT ALSO SPOKE MY WORDS OUT LOUD SO THE OTHERS KNEW WHAT WAS GOING ON

I AM ARE YOU A FRIEND OF MINE AND A FRIEND OF MY TIGER'S, AS WELL AS AN ENEMY OF THE LUMBERCHICKEN?



I CAN BE. THAT GOBLIN IS NOT THE ONLY ONE WATCHING YOU.



AND BOTH THE GOBLINS AND MY KIND ARE ENSLAVED BY THE CHICKEN.



I BROKE MY BONDS BY TAPPING INTO ELDritch POWER. YOU ARE DOING THE SAME NOW.



I REPEATED ITS HALF OF THE CONVERSATION FOR EVERY ONE ELSE, AND THEN I CONTINUED

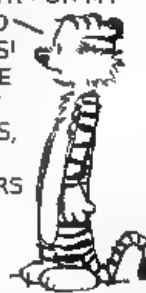
WHAT'S YOUR NAME? I'M CALVIN, A HUMAN WHO'S TIRED OF BEING RULED BY AN EVIL GOD WHO ANSWERS TO NO ONE!



I'M ZHUPARR, A DEMON TIRED OF THE SAME AND CURIOUS ABOUT OTHER PERSPECTIVES!



AND I'M HOBBS, A TIGER WHO WANTS TO BE ABLE TO DO MORE IN THIS WORLD BOTH FOR MY BEST FRIEND AND OTHERS! YOU CAN SEE ME THE WAY CALVIN DOES, SO YOU CAN MAKE OTHERS DO IT TOO!



I'VE ALWAYS LIKED THE COLOR ORANGE! LET US JOIN FORCES!



BEFORE WE DO THAT, WHAT DO YOU MEAN THAT THERE ARE OTHERS WATCHING ME?



IT'LL BE FASTER IF I SHOW YOU. YOUR OTHER FRIEND WITH THE EYE CAN VERIFY IT.



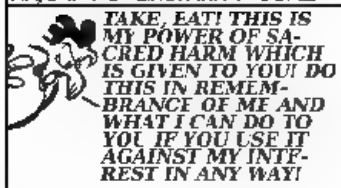
THE VISION IT SHOWED ME WAS HORRIFYING



WHY HAVE WE DEMONS BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO WORMS?

I'M TIRED OF KILLING PEOPLE MYSELF! YOU WILL BE WORM COMMUNION FOR MY NEW AGENTS!

AFTER THE CHICKEN TURNED THE BIG FOUR DOCTORS INTO POOP GHOSTS AND TOOK OVER THEIR DUTIES FOR AWHILE, HE DECIDED HE HAD BETTER THINGS TO DO AND DELEGATED HIS AUTHORITY TO KEEP HIS REPLACEMENT MASS MURDERERS FROM TURNING ON HIM. HE HAD THEM EAT DEMONS THAT HE'D TURNED INTO WORMS AND MIND-CONTROLLED THE VAST MAJORITY OF ZHUPARR'S PEOPLE



TAKE, EAT! THIS IS MY POWER OF SACRED HARM WHICH IS GIVEN TO YOU! DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME AND WHAT I CAN DO TO YOU IF YOU USE IT AGAINST MY INTEREST IN ANY WAY!

MY LAST HEALERS TURNED ON ME, BUT YOU WILL NOT! WORMS EAT A BIT OF MY NEW AGENTS' BRAINS! IF THEY TURN ON ME, EAT ALL OF THEIR BRAINS! AGENTS. YOUR TASK IS TO CHANGE ALL REPROBATE PEOPLE FROM BEING ALIVE PEOPLE TO BEING DEAD PEOPLE, TO PURIFY MY WORLD! IF YOU CAN CAUSE EXTRA PAIN IN THE PROCESS, THEN ALWAYS DO SO! AND DO NOT FAIL ME!

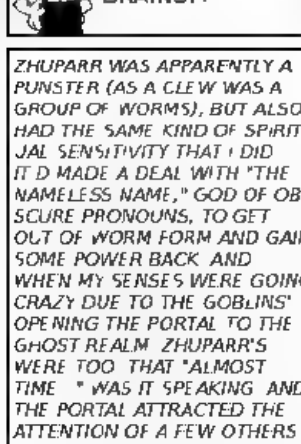


I RAN THIS BY THE OTHERS, AND BOTH UNCLE MAX AND SARANNA CONFIRMED IT

I KNEW ABOUT HIS DELEGATING HEALTH CARE TO NEW PEOPLE, BECAUSE HE'S GOTTEN LAZY! I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE WORMS, BUT IT FITS HIS NEW PEOPLE'S ERRATIC BEHAVIOR!



AFTER LEARNING ABOUT THE CHICKEN'S MASS SLAUGHTER AFTER QUADPOOP DAY, I DID NOTICE SOME ODD COMMENTS ABOUT WORMS, BUT I DIDN'T LOOK AT IT IN MORE DETAIL UNTIL NOW! SO A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE GETTING LOCKED UP, TORTURED AND KILLED AT THE BEHEST OF PEOPLE WITH WORM EATEN BRAINS?!



AND ENSLAVED WORMS AT THAT? WHY DOESN'T HE JUST USE BRAIN WASHED AGENTS AS HEALERS? NOT THAT THAT'S ANY BETTER!



ACCORDING TO SPIES, IT'S ONE OF HIS QUIRKS HE INSISTS THAT ALL HARM DONE IN HIS NAME MUST BE FREELY DONE!

THAT IS ONLY THE FIRST PART. THERE IS STILL MORE.



THE VISION CONTINUED FOCUSING ON SEVERAL OF THE WORMS WHO ESCAPED THE FULL GROUP WHILE THE CHICKEN GLOATED, AND THEN ON ONE IN PARTICULAR THAT WAS ZHUPARR

THAT CHICKEN DOESN'T HAVE A CLEW, OR AT LEAST NOT A FULL ONE! THE OTHERS ARE GOING THEIR OWN WAYS. WHAT'S THAT I SENSE?



ZHUPARR WAS APPARENTLY A PUNSTER (AS A CLEW WAS A GROUP OF WORMS), BUT ALSO HAD THE SAME KIND OF SPIRITUAL SENSITIVITY THAT I DID. IT'D MADE A DEAL WITH "THE NAMELESS NAME," GOD OF OBSCURE PRONOUNS, TO GET OUT OF WORM FORM AND GAIN SOME POWER BACK AND WHEN MY SENSES WERE GOING CRAZY DUE TO THE GOBLINS' OPENING THE PORTAL TO THE GHOST REALM ZHUPARR'S WERE TOO THAT "ALMOST TIME" WAS IT SPEAKING AND THE PORTAL ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF A FEW OTHERS

A GOD OF OBSCURE PRONOUNS COULD DO THAT? I GUESS "THE NAMELESS NAME" REALLY HOLDS A GRUDGE AGAINST THE CHICKEN FOR HIS PRONOUN ABOLITION MONTH!



HE ABOLISHED PRONOUNS FOR A MONTH?



CALVIN HAVE NO IDEA WHY DAD WAS ALL "THE HOLY LUMBERCHICKEN SAYS THAT THE HOLY LUMBERCHICKEN WILL PUNISH ALL WHO REFER TO THE HOLY LUMBERCHICKEN BY ANYTHING OTHER THAN THE HOLY LUMBERCHICKEN'S FULL TITLE! AND DAD WILL PUNISH CALVIN MORE FOR BOTH BE TRAYING THE HOLY LUMBERCHICKEN AND CALVIN'S FATHER!" AND THEN THE CHICKEN DROPPED IT A MONTH LATER. NOW HE USES PRONOUNS, BUT PRETENDS HE DOESN'T IF ANYONE BRINGS IT UP

IT WAS ALL A MOUTHFUL I COULD UNDERSTAND TITLES, SINCE NO ONE PAID MUCH ATTENTION WHEN I DECIDED I'D CHANGE TO "CALVIN THE BOLD." BUT BANNING AN ENTIRE PART OF SPEECH?



MY PRONOUNS ARE A SACRED MYSTERY. THEY ARE POWERFUL.



WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? I'VE BEEN THINKING OF YOU AS "IT" BECAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, AND YOU DIDN'T CORRECT ME! IS "THE NAMELESS NAME" GOING TO BE AFTER ME NOW?



RELAX. YOU DIDN'T KNOW, AND NEITHER I NOR MY GOD ARE SO EASILY OFFENDED.



IT/ITS WORKS, BECAUSE MY TRUE PRONOUNS ARE SACRED AND WILL LIGHT YOUR DARKEST HOUR!



I REMEMBER THE BACKLASH FROM PRONOUN ABOLITION MONTH! SOME PEOPLE STARTED USING "PRONOUN" AS A SWEAR WORD, LIKE "PRONOUN YOU, YOU PRONOUNING PRONOUNER!" ALTHOUGH IT WAS NEVER COMMON ENOUGH TO HAVE A COMMANDMENT AGAINST IT



FASCINATING. I WAS BUSY LEARNING THE POWER OF SIX AT THAT TIME.



AFTER ANOTHER BREAK TO TELL THE OTHERS ZHUPARR'S HALF OF THE CONVERSATION (TELEPATHY WAS COOL BUT IT WAS GIVING ME A HEADACHE) I TURNED THINGS OVER TO HOBBS

WHY WOULD YOU HELP JS? CALVIN HAS DEFINITELY LEARNED SOME NEW TRICKS SINCE I WAS LOST TO HIM.



BUT ASIDE FROM CURIOSITY AND VENGEANCE AGAINST THE CHICKEN FOR TURNING YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE INTO WORMS, WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF THIS DEAL? IF WE MERGE AND YOU TURN ON CALVIN, I'LL FIGHT YOU!



I'VE NEVER BEEN FRIENDS WITH MORTALS BEFORE. I'D LIKE TO BE!



AND A MALE TIGER FORM IS MOST INTERESTING COMPARED TO WHAT I AM!



AS FLATTERED AS I AM BY THAT, WHY? IS THAT AMOEBA FORM YOUR NATURAL ONE? AND WHY DOES YOUR RITUAL REQUIRE PURPLE LIQUID IF YOU REALLY LIKE THE COLOR ORANGE?



ZHUPARR I AM AN AMOEBA DEMON, BUT THE TEETH AND HORNS WERE CHANGES WROUGHT BY MY ELDRITCH POWER, AND OF ALL THE WEIRDNESS HERE YOU OBJECT TO MY HAVING MORE THAN ONE FAVORITE COLOR? I LIKE PURPLE, ORANGE AND ONE COLOR I'VE ONLY BEEN ABLE TO SEE SINCE MY ELDRITCH TRANSFORMATION. GLEMZARIC IT IS BEYOND THE SIGHT OF MOST MAYBE YOUR ROBOT FRIEND CAN RECALIBRATE HIS VISION IN ORDER TO SEE IT? BESIDES, I'LL BE ABLE TO DO ONE VERY IMPORTANT THING AS A TIGER.

HOBBS WHAT'S THAT?

ZHUPARR WEAR HATS THAT BREAK THE CHICKEN'S MANY COMMANDMENTS!

"NOBODY WEARS SOMBREROS" WHAT FUN IS IT BEING "COOL" IF YOU CAN'T WEAR A SOMBRERO?



I SUDDENLY HAD A FLASHBACK TO ONE OF HOBBS' AND MY FIGHTS

AND THAT LED TO ANOTHER FLASHBACK A FEW YEARS LATER

THERE'S A COMMANDMENT 32748 BANNING WEARING SOMBREROS? MAYBE THEY'RE COOLER THAN I THOUGHT! AND COMMANDMENT 32749 BANS WEARING NEON MAGENTA SOMBREROS WITH GOOGLY EYES? WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?



I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR MIND! I'LL FINALLY GET TO WEAR A SOMBRERO!



I SHUDDERED AT THE THOUGHT OF THE CHICKEN'S HAVING MORE SLAVES. THE CHICKEN BRAINWASHED BUTT PEOPLE, THE BUTT VICEROY BRAINWASHED ORDINARY PEOPLE. THE CAVE GOBLINS THE GUN GNOME'S (WILLING SLAVE'S COUNTED). THE AMOEBA DEMON'S TURNED-BRAIN EATING WORMS, POSSIBLY SOME OF THE ORCS THAT SARANNA HAD TALKED ABOUT (AFTER SEEING THE ONE IN THE RESTAURANT, I THOUGHT I'D SEEN AT LEAST ONE IN THE DUNGEON, BUT THEY DIDN'T EAT WITH US FOR WHATEVER REASON). THERE WERE JUST TOO MANY BUT THIS DEAL TO KEEP THE CHICKEN FROM MAKING MORE SEEMED FITTING, AND HOBBS APPROVED IT.

THIS WARRIOR AGAINST THE CHICKEN HAD SOME ODD REASONING BUT HE SHOWED PROMISE. I ONLY HAD ONE MORE QUESTION

HOBBS AND I BOTH AGREE YOU CAN WEAR ALL THE CHICKEN DEFEYING HEADWEAR YOU LIKE BUT WHAT IS THIS POWER OF SIX YOU'VE TALKED ABOUT? IS IT RELATED TO YOUR SECRET PRONOUNS?



NO, IT'S A SEPARATE THING. LET ME TRY TO SHOW YOU WHAT IT IS...



THE OTHERS WATCHED

WHILE WE'RE WAITING TO HEAR THE NEXT PART OF THE DEAL, DOES ANYONE HAVE ANYTHING INTERESTING TO TALK ABOUT?



I CHECKED THE MOST RECENT LIST OF COMMANDMENTS. THE ONE YOU MENTIONED ABOUT NOT CHANGING THE LYRICS TO CHICKEN CAROLS FOR FUN IS 69419 THE ONE RIGHT AFTER IT, 69420, BANS BLEEPING OUT RANDOM WORDS IN SONGS TO MAKE THEM SOUND MORE OBSCENE.



HUH! I BROKE THAT SECOND ONE IN HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC CLASS WHEN WE WATCHED "THE KING AND I," WITH THAT "WHENEVER I FEEL AFRAID" SONG! "WHENEVER I FEEL *BLEEP*, I HOLD MY *BLEEP* ERECT"



MY COUSIN WOULD COMPLAIN IF ANYONE TALKED ABOUT ERECTING THINGS OR ERECTIONS, SAYING 'T WAS INDECENT. I DON'T KNOW WHY SHE HAD SUCH A PROBLEM WITH BUILDINGS, THOUGH!



ALL THE COMMANDMENTS YOU HAD TO DEAL WITH CONSTANTLY ARE RIDICULOUS! ONE OF THE FEW I HAD TO DEAL WITH WAS 79521, WHICH SAYS THE NAME SHIRI IS ONLY FOR FEMALE BUTT PEOPLE SERVING THE HOLY LUMBERCHICKEN! (ONE OF MY CLASSMATES HAD A BABY SISTER)



THAT IS IN COMMANDMENTS 79487 THROUGH 79725, ALL DEVOTED TO USAGE AND SPELLING OF NAMES. OTHERS IN IT INCLUDE 79647, WHICH BANS THE SPELLING OF "MISSY" AS "MYSSIE" AND A NON-SEQUENTIAL BAN ON TWENTY-THREE DIFFERENT SPELLINGS OF "DARYL."



I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD SPELL IT THAT MANY WAYS! AS FOR BUTT PEOPLE NAMES, I KNOW THEY BREED TRUE, SOMEHOW, BUT HOW MANY OF THEM ARE THERE NOW? ..WAIT, CALVIN'S STIRRING AGAIN, AND HE LOOKS LIKE HE HAS QUESTIONS FOR US!



ZHUPARR SHOWED ME A VISION DEMONSTRATING ITS POWERS, SINCE WE CAN'T VERY WELL SHOW THEM OFF IN A LIBRARY THEY LOOK GOOD, BUT DOES ANYONE KNOW WHAT DYNAMIC ELEMENTAL NCURSION IS, JUST SO I UNDERSTAND IT?



SHAMAN GHEFZARAL MENTIONED IT ONCE WHEN HE WAS TELLING ME ABOUT ADVANCED MAGICAL TECHNIQUES IT'S TAPPING INTO MULTIPLE GROUPS OF MAGICAL ELEMENTS AT ONCE, INSTEAD OF BEING LIMITED TO ONLY ONE GROUP OF THEM



OKAY, NOW I GET IT! ZHUPARR TALKED ABOUT THE INDO EUROPEAN ELEMENTS, THE CHINESE ELEMENTS, AND THE DISCORDIAN ELEMENTS, AND WHAT IT SHOWED ME LINES UP WITH ITS PULLING FROM ALL THREE OF THEM!



INDO EUROPEAN IS EARTH, WATER, FIRE, AIR, AND ETHER OR VOID CHINESE IS EARTH, WATER, FIRE, WOOD, AND METAL. I FORGET THE DISCORDIAN.

SWEET, BOOM, PUNGENT, PRICKLE, AND ORANGE!



THE POWER OF SIX THAT ZHUPARR SAYS IT HAS IS THE USE OF TWO ELEMENTS EACH FROM THOSE THREE GROUPS AIR AND VOID, WOOD AND METAL AND BOOM AND PRICKLE! IT CAN SPAWN OR CONTROL THEM!



SO IT'S LIKE REPLICANT! A ROBOT FROM THAT MOVIE I WASN'T ALLOWED TO WATCH? NO, THE COMIC CHARACTER! THE ONE ROGUE ARMY! TONY GAMBINO WITH ALL THE POWERS OF HIS COOL UNCLES THE FLASH ROGUES!



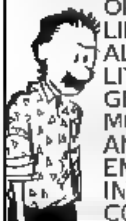
WELL, EXCEPT FOR THE PART WHERE HE WENT CRAZY, AND WITHOUT HIS TECHNICALLY BEING ON THE SIDE OF THE VILLAINS! BUT ACCORDING TO THE CHICKEN, WE'RE ALL VILLAINS ANYWAY FOR OPPOSING HIM!



ZHUPARR WANTED TO USE ORANGE AS ONE OF ITS DISCORDIAN ELEMENTS, BUT IS IT TRUE THAT THERE WAS A PRO CHICKEN POLITICAL MOVEMENT THAT TRIED TO CLAIM THE COLOR ORANGE AS ITS OWN?



YES, BUT IT WAS BRIEF AND THE COLOR ALWAYS LOOKED MORE GOLDEN BROWN TO ME ANYWAY THEY WERE ALSO OBSESSED WITH THEIR ENEMIES' BEING AWAKE, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT? ONE ALTERNATE REALITY HAD THEM GET AHOOD OF A MONKEY'S PAW AND WASH THE ENTIRE PLANET INTO A MASS COMA!



THAT'S WHY THEN! ZHUPARR LOOKED INTO THE INDANTHRENE HERESY BRANCH OF DISCORDIANISM, WHERE THE ORANGE ELEMENT WAS REPLACED WITH BLUE, AND THE SETTING ORANGE DAY OF THE WEEK WAS REPLACED WITH RISING BLUEBERRY, BUT THE BLUEBERRY BASED POWERS DIDN'T THRILL IT



BY THE TIME THAT GROUP STOPPED HIJACKING ORANGE IT'D ALREADY GONE WITH BOOM TO BLOW THINGS UP INSTEAD OF ORANGE TO BIND PEOPLE WITH GI-GANTIC ORANGE PEELS

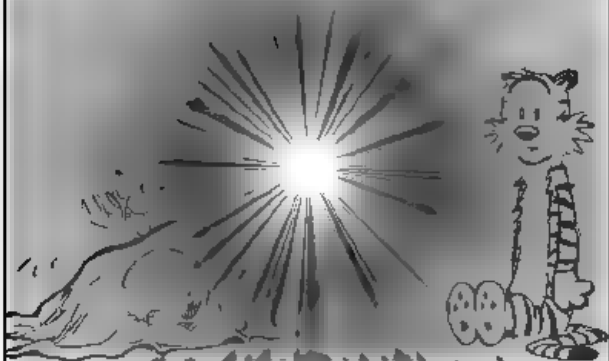


AND NOW THAT IT'S ALL CLEARED UP, ZHUPARR AND HOBBS CAN PUT THEIR HEADS TOGETHER LET'S SEE HOW THIS STUFF REALLY WORKS!



WE ARE ONE.

WE ARE ONE!



WHOA! THIS BODY OF OURS MINE IS SO DIFFERENT! AND YET IT FITS!



THIS DEAL WAS ONLY MY FIRST BUT IT WAS THE START OF A MUCH BIGGER THING I HAD A NEW TITLE NOW!

I'LL HAVE TO HIDE MY DEMONIC NATURE FOR NOW! CALL ME ZHUPARR HOBBS OR SUPER-HOBBS!



EVERYONE, MEET SUPER-HOBBS! AND CALL ME CALVIN THE ELDRITCH CULTIST!



SO THIS IS HOW YOU SEE YOUR STUFFED TIGER! HELLO, HOBBS, OR SUPER-HOBBS! SJISIE'S MEMORIES MENTION YOU ENOUGH THAT I CAN PULL THEM UP EASILY, ALTHOUGH I'M STILL PROCESSING MOST OF THEM!



H, SUPER-HOBBS! YOU MAKE ME WANT TO FIND MR. BUN AND SEE IF I CAN MAKE HIM VISIBLE TO EVERYBODY ELSE THE SAME WAY!



GREETINGS TO YOU, SUPER-HOBBS! I DID NOT HAVE A ROBOTIC TIGER COMPANION IN MY ORIGINAL REALITY, BUT IT DIVERGED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THIS ONE BEFORE IT WAS DESTROYED. IF YOU ARE A FRIEND TO HIM, YOU ARE A FRIEND TO ME AS WELL!



WOW! HELLO, SUPER-HOBBS! YOU REALLY DO HAVE MANDIBLES OF DEATH AND A KILLER'S EYE! AS LONG AS YOU ONLY USE THEM AGAINST THE CHICKEN AND HIS ALLIES, JUST LIKE TIFFANY DOES!



A DOOR BURST OPEN



HELLO, ZHUPARR, AND HELLO, HOBBS! YOU BOTH HAVE PASSED MY ENHANCED HOSTILITY CHECK, AS WELL AS MY STANDARD ONE THAT I DO FOR ALL SUMMONS! AT LEAST THE PROPHECY TOLD ME YOU'D BE COMING, SO I HAD THE PAPERWORK DONE IN ADVANCE!



I LIKE GREETING NEW SUMMONS PERSONALLY! SAVE YOUR POWERS FOR YALDABA-AWK, OR YOU'LL SEE WHAT MY POWERS ARE LIKE! GOOD LUCK IN YOUR FIGHT!

THANK YOU, EVERYBODY! AND YES, MA'AM! NO ONE WHO'S SMART ANTAGONIZES ON! WE BOTH KNOW THAT NOW!



AND THAT IS TIFFANY!

AFTER TIFFANY LEFT

IT'S ALL WORKING OUT! WHICH IS GOOD, BUT WE STILL HAVE A WAY TO GO TO PROPERLY FIGHT THE CHICKEN GOD! WAIT, YOUR EYEPATCH SWITCHED AGAIN!



THE MAGIC HOLDING US HERE IS WEAKENING AGAIN! WE SHOULD PROBABLY WRAP THINGS UP!



IN WHICH CASE, SINCE CALVIN IS AN ALTERNATE VERSION OF ME, I CAN USE MY ANSIBLE TO ESTABLISH A PSYCHIC CONNECTION WITH HIM, JUST AS I HAVE DONE WITH SEYMOUR. GIVE ME A MOMENT TO DO THE APPROPRIATE SCAN... DONE!



AND WE SHOULD GET TO LIBERATING CALVIN AND SARANNA BEFORE IT WEAKENS MORE, JUST IN CASE SOMETHING GOES WRONG! EVERYONE FOLLOW ME TO THE WISHING CARPET!



ON THE WAY THERE

HOW DOES THE PSYCHIC CONNECTION WORK?

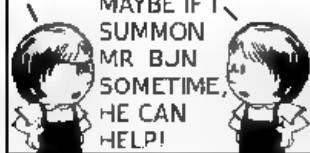
MUCH LIKE A MENTAL PHONE CALL YOU CAN PICK UP. IT CAN ALSO WORK AS AN EMERGENCY BEACON IF THE SITUATION IS BAD ENOUGH, SUCH AS THE INCIDENT WITH THE CHICKEN.



AND SINCE I'M POWERED PARTLY BY CALVIN'S IMAGINATION, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE A CONNECTION LIKE THAT TOO! I'LL HAVE TO PRACTICE!

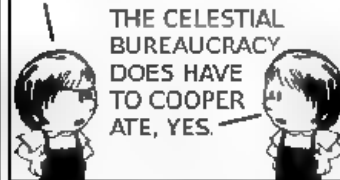


I WISH THERE WAS A WAY FOR US TO KEEP IN TOUCH! HAVING YOUR MEMORIES ISN'T THE SAME, EVEN AFTER I FINALLY PROCESS THEM ALL!



MAYBE IF I SUMMON MR. BUN SOMETIME, HE CAN HELP!

ASSUMING YOU CAN FIND AND RELOCATE THE ELDRITCH BEING TO MAKE HIM REAL TO EVERYBODY? I HOPE TIFFANY LETS IT THROUGH!



THE CELESTIAL BUREAUCRACY DOES HAVE TO COOPERATE, YES.

THERE...



IT LOOKS JUST LIKE A NORMAL CARPET!

I KNOW, BUT THERE'S A REASON IT'S IN THIS BUILDING SURROUNDED BY A MAGICAL AURA VISIBLE EVEN TO AMATEURS!



IT LOOKED LIKE A NEON GLOW TO ME, REMINISCENT OF THE LAVA LAMP IMAGE THAT BRIAN HAD SHOWN DURING THE RITUAL (WHICH REMINDED ME LAVA LAMPS WERE COOL AND I NEEDED TO GET A REAL ONE FOR BOTH AESTHETIC AND RITUAL PURPOSES).

AND THEY JUST LET ANYONE IN HERE TO USE THE CARPET?



IT HAS A BUNCH OF PRESERVATION SPELLS ON IT TO KEEP IT FROM BEING DAMAGED OR DESTROYED, AND ANYONE WHO USES IT NEEDS SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE OF WHERE TO GO, UNLESS THEY ONLY WANT TO GO TO CERTAIN PUBLIC LOCATIONS! AND I HAVE THE RIGHT SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE WE NEED!



THERE'S A BULLETIN BOARD WITH A BUNCH OF PAPERS STUCK TO IT! HOW MANY PEOPLE COME HERE?



AND THERE ARE SO MANY PAPERS! LOOK AT THIS NOTICE SAYING "READ WHAT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS AND YOU OWE ME \$100,000 AND YOUR LIFE!"



THE OTHER SIDE IS BLANK.

PUBLIC TRAVEL MEANS PUBLIC NOTICES AND THAT NOTICE IS BY SOME PRANKSTER. A ONE-SIDED GEAS WITH NO ENFORCEMENT PARAMETERS LIKE THAT WON'T WORK, AS ANYONE WITH SUFFICIENT MAGICAL KNOWLEDGE COULD TELL YOU!

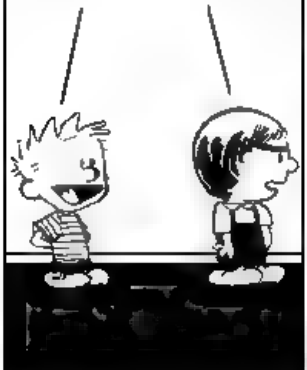


WHICH THE GOBLINS DID! AND WHAT'S WITH THE MULTICOLORED PANELING ALL OVER THE PLACE?



I DON'T KNOW WHOEVER BUILT THIS PLACE LIKED IT?

I'M READY! SO AM I!



I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I SHOULD GO TOO!



YOU SHOULD, JUST IN CASE!

GIVE ME A SECOND TO THINK OF THE PASS-PHASE AND WISH US ALL THERE. SUSIE, BRIAN, WE WON'T BE LONG!



SEE YOU SOON!



MAY YOUR LIBERATION BE WELL, AS OURS.



I THOUGHT WE'D BE SENT TO ANOTHER CITY! WHY ARE WE OUTSIDE ON WHATEVER WORLD THE CELD NOS MOVED TO?



SECURITY? THAT MAKES SOME SENSE IF A HOSTILE FORCE TRIED TO GET IN, THEY'D BE KEPT FAR AWAY FROM EVERYONE!



THIS IS WHERE IT SENT EVERY ONE LAST TIME FOLLOW ME!



WE'RE RIGHT BEHIND YOU!

UNCLE MAX LED US TO A LIGHTED TENT IN THE DISTANCE. IT WAS MUCH BIGGER ON THE INSIDE.

WE FINALLY GET TO PUT A FACE TO SIMON MAGUSSAURUS! COOLNESS! AND THIS TENT EVEN LETS GHOSTS IN!

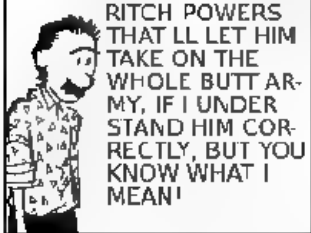


I DON'T KNOW MUCH MORE THAN WHAT YOU FILLED ME IN ON DURING THE WALK HERE, PLUS OUR COMBINED KNOWLEDGE, BUT



I'M CURIOUS, TOO.

GREETINGS, MAGUS! I'M BACK YET AGAIN, AND I HAVE THE LAST FEW PEOPLE INVOLVED WITH THE PROPHECY WITH ME! WELL, ONE'S ACTUALLY A TIGER-PERSON WITH ELD-



RITCH POWERS THAT'LL LET HIM TAKE ON THE WHOLE BUTT ARMY, IF I UNDERSTAND HIM CORRECTLY, BUT YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN!

YOU HAVE GOOD TIMING, BECAUSE YOUR CHARGES' TIME HERE IS SHORT! THE MAGIC HOLDING THEM HERE WILL NOT HOLD MUCH LONGER! I WISH WE COULD PROPERLY CATCH UP, BUT IT IS NOT TO BE NOW!



LOOKING BACK THE VOWS WE THREE TOOK WERE A BLUR. WE'D AGREED ON THE SAME ONES, AT LEAST WE DIFFERED ON WHICH ARBITRARY RULE TO BREAK AS PART OF THOSE SAME VOWS, BUT WE HAD A TON OF OPTIONS THERE.

I VOW TO FIGHT AGAINST TYRANNY OF ALL KINDS, TO USE FORCE ONLY WHEN IT'S NEEDED TO AVOID WORSE TYRANNY, AND TO HELP ALL THOSE I CAN IN THIS ENDEAVOR.



I WILL ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF IMAGINATION, AND SPREAD CREATIVE CHAOS TO IMPROVE THE WORLD. AND IF LAVA LAMPS ARE BANNED, I WILL RETURN ON PRINCIPLE FOR THIS ATTAINMENT.



WELL, SARANNA SAID "CREATIVITY" RATHER THAN "CREATIVE CHAOS," BUT THE REST WAS THE SAME. AFTER MY VOWS, I NO LONGER HAD TO WONDER WHAT DINOSAUR ERIS LOOKED LIKE!

WHOO! CREATIVITY FOR THE WIN! I DRESSED UP FOR THIS OCCASION! I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT YOU'LL DO WITH YOUR NEW POWER!



SARANNA WAS MORE CONFIDENT IN HER VOWS THAN I WAS

AND IF THERE'S EVER A BAN ON PUTTING RANCH DRESSING ON SPICY TOPOKKI, I WILL RETURN ON PRINCE FOR THS I ATTA N GNOSIS.



I FOUND OUT LATER THAT TOPOKKI WAS A RICE CAKE NOODLE DISH A LOT OF THE GOBLINS LIKED. AND WHICH SARANNA HAD EATEN WITH THEM A FEW TIMES. SHE'D INTRODUCED THEM TO RANCH DRESSING WHEN SHE COULDN'T HANDLE ITS SPICE LEVEL.

ALSO, THIS RITUAL WAS SUPERFICIALLY SIMILAR TO THE RITUAL THAT THE GOBLINS USED TO OFFICIALLY MAKE HER AN HONORARY GREMLIN WHICH IS WHY SHE TOOK IT IN STRIDE.

I WAS AT LEAST REASSURED BY SEEING ERIS IN ANOTHER FORM. I WONDERED HOW SUPER HOBBS WAS HOLDING UP.

POST GNOSIS VERTIGO IS WORSE WHEN IT'S FOR TWO, EVEN IF ONLY ONE OF US NEEDED IT!



IT TURNED OUT THAT HOBBS WAS LIBERATED ALREADY BECAUSE I'D PUT HIM IN THAT FORM INSTEAD OF THE CHICKEN. ZHUPARR WAS LIKELY LIBERATED BY ITS ELDRITCH POWER. BUT IT WENT THROUGH THE RITUAL JUST IN CASE, MUCH LIKE BRIAN.

IT IS DONE! YOU ALL SHOULD RECOVER SOON FROM THE EXPERIENCE, AS MAX DID.



WE WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF RECOVERING WHEN SHAMAN GHEF ZARAL APPEARED AGAIN. APPARENTLY THE MAGUS HAD BEEN RIGHT ABOUT THE MAGIC'S WEARING THIN.

GOOD. YOU HAVE SUMMONED WHO YOU NEEDED TO SUMMON, AND YOU ARE LIBERATED. ZARB IS UNABLE TO HOLD THE SPELL MUCH LONGER.



NOTHING ELSE ESSENTIAL REMAINS. I RECOMMEND YOU RETURN WITHIN THE NEXT TWO MINUTES, BECAUSE THE SPELL WILL HOLD FOR NO MORE THAN FIVE.



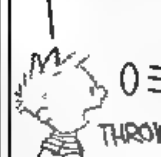
IT'LL TAKE ABOUT FIVE MINUTES TO GET BACK TO THE WISHING CARPET, EVEN IF WE RUN! I'LL HAVE TO TELL EVERYONE ELSE GOODBYE FOR YOU!

SUPER HOBBS CAN USE HIS VOID POWER TO WRINKLE SPACE TIME AND TELEPORT BUT NO ONE ELSE CAN!



HOW WILL SUPER HOBBS RETURN WITH JS? HE DOESN'T HAVE A LANYARD OF RETURNING!

WE ACCOUNTED FOR THIS. HERE IS A SPARE LANYARD, COURTESY OF ZARB. CATCH!



I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN THE NEXT TIME THE BARRIER BETWEEN PLANES WEAKENS NATURALLY, WHICH SHOULD BE AROUND HALLOWEEN! UNLESS YOU FIGURE OUT ANOTHER WAY BEFORE THEN!



I'LL MISS YOU, UNCLE MAX!
I'LL MISS YOU TOO! WE'RE NOT RELATED, BUT THIS HAS BEEN GOOD!



I'LL MISS YOU BOTH TOO! AT LEAST THE GOBLINS CAN HELP YOU AND, SPEAKING OF BONDS, IF YOU EVER FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO KRALTAR, WOULD YOU LET ME KNOW?



YOU SAID THAT WAS A MATTER OF GOBLIN SECURITY, SO AS LONG AS FINDING OUT DOESN'T BREAK THAT! REAL FRIENDS ARE HARD TO FIND, I KNOW!



I'LL MISS YOU, TOO! I REMEMBER YOUR LAST VISIT WHEN YOU WERE STILL ALIVE, AND ZHUPARR HAS SIMILARLY MINDED RELATIVES AMONG THE CHICKENS ENSLAVED BY BRAIN WORMS THAT IT MISSES!



IT'S STILL WEIRD HAVING TWO PEOPLE IN MY HEAD. OUR HEAD!



SAME FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S MEMORIES!



THANKS, EVERYBODY! I WISH THAT SUPER HOBBS COULD HAVE GOTTEN TO KNOW BRIAN AND SUSIE, TOO!



WE'LL MEET AGAIN SOMETIME AND REMEDY THAT!



AND AFTER THE WARS OVER, ZHUPARR CAN INTRODUCE YOU TO ITS RELATIVES, ONCE THEY'RE ALL FREED.

IF YOU THREE ARE ALL READY, I WILL MANUALLY PULL YOU BACK NOW. YOU STILL NEED TIME TO RECOVER, BUT WE CAN PASS IT OFF AS A BRIEF ILLNESS AND USE IT AS COVER TO DEBRIEF YOU.



WHY DO WE NEED TO BE DEBRIEFED?

WE MUST BE CERTAIN THAT YOU UNDERSTAND ALL THAT YOU NEED TO.

WHAT ABOUT THE GUIDE WE NEED?



THE ONE THE PROPHECY SPEAKS OF? WE HAVE ARRANGED FOR ONE, WHOM WE WILL COVER IN YOUR DEBRIEFING. FEAR NOT.

IF YOU SAY SO!



I'M READY! I AM READY, SHAMAN.

I'M READY, TOO! I'LL HAVE TO HIDE WHEN I ARRIVE.



AS THE GHOST PLANE BEGAN TO WAVER AND SHIMMER AROUND US, I THOUGHT OF ALL WE'D LEARNED HERE. IT'D BEEN HOURS, BUT IT FELT LIKE MONTHS.

AS UNFORTUNATE AS THEY WERE TO BE ENSLAVED BY THE CHICKEN, THE GOBLINS HAD AT LEAST KEPT A LOT OF THEMSELVES. AFTERWARD, THE CHICKEN WAS GETTING CRAZIER, BUT HE HADN'T QUITE GONE OFF THE DEEP END YET.

KNOWING THAT ESCAPE FROM THEIR BONDS VIA ELDRITCH POWER WAS A COMPLEX BUSINESS, ONE THAT IRREPARABLY WARPED MOST OF THOSE WHO TRIED IT, MADE ME APPRECIATE HOW FORTUNATE I WAS TO NOT BE ENSLAVED AND TO HAVE DEALT WITH SOMEONE LIKE ZHUPARR.

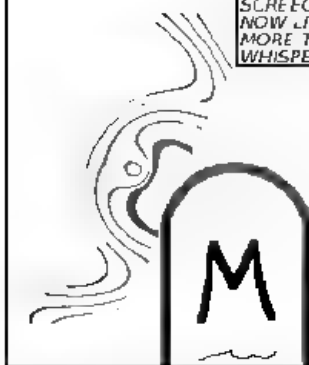
EVIL ELDRITCH BEINGS WOULD ENSLAVE YOU AND MUTATE YOU INTO A WORSE FORM, AN ALTERNATE VERSION OF ME HAD LEARNED THAT THE HARD WAY, AS I FOUND OUT A FEW YEARS LATER.



WHO IS THIS CALVIN?

ELDRITCH BEINGS FROM XORIAT WERE BAD NEWS.

THE RIFT'S SOUNDLESS SCREECH WAS NOW LITTLE MORE THAN A WHISPER.



WE MADE IT! WE'RE BACK!

STILL DIZZY

THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORK, ZARB!

YOU'RE WELCOME! TIME HAS STARTED FLOWING AGAIN FOR EVERYONE OTHER THAN ME, SHAMAN GHEFZAAR, AND YOU THREE. NOW FOLLOW ME TO THE INFIRMARY! YOUR GLIDE AWAITS!



IN TIFFANY'S OFFICE

GOOD! IT'S RESOLVED, AND I ONLY HAVE TO DO A LITTLE MORE PAPERWORK. I MUST ALSO PREPARE! WE FINALLY GET TO OPENLY GO TO WAR WITH YALDABA-AWK!



CHECKING MY MAIL... THERE'S A NEW BRANCH OF DREMVALAAR'S WITNESSES: THE UNIFIED D.W.'S THAT BELIEVE THAT DREMVALAAR IS HALF-NON-EXISTENT AND HALF POOP.



AND THEY FIGHT OVER WHETHER THE LEFT SIDE IS NON-EXISTENT AND THE RIGHT SIDE IS POOP, OR VICE VERSA! I'LL NEED TO HIRE MORE SECURITY GUARDS!



I HAVE ENOUGH LOGISTICS TO WORRY ABOUT WITHOUT MORE BRAWLING! "YOU'VE PUT HALF-POOP. DREMVALAAR'S NON-EXISTENCE ON THE WRONG SIDE!" WHAT BUNKUM!



IN BETTER NEWS, THE ANTI-CHICKEN GROUPS READY TO BREAK ALL HIS ANTI-SEX COMMANDMENTS AND ALL HIS ANTI-BLASPHEMY COMMANDMENTS ARE READY!



SOME OF THEM HAVE JOINED FORCES! YALDABA-AWK WILL BE DEFEATED NOT JUST WITH ORGIES AND BLASPHEMY, BUT WITH BLASPHEMOUS ORGIES! JOY!



NOW THE GOBLINS MUST DO THEIR PART FOR THE PROPHECY IN THE REALM OF THE LIVING! DESPITE THEIR BONDAGE, THEY'RE STRONG, AND THEY WILL PROVE THAT!



IN THE GOBLINS' INFIRMARY ANOTHER DIMENSIONAL RIFT HAS OPENED, BRINGING PEOPLE. THE CHICKEN CAN'T EAT WITHOUT TROUBLE, AND THE BUTT VICEROY CAN'T BRAIN WASH IT'S A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY FOR HEALER GHOLZOMPUS!

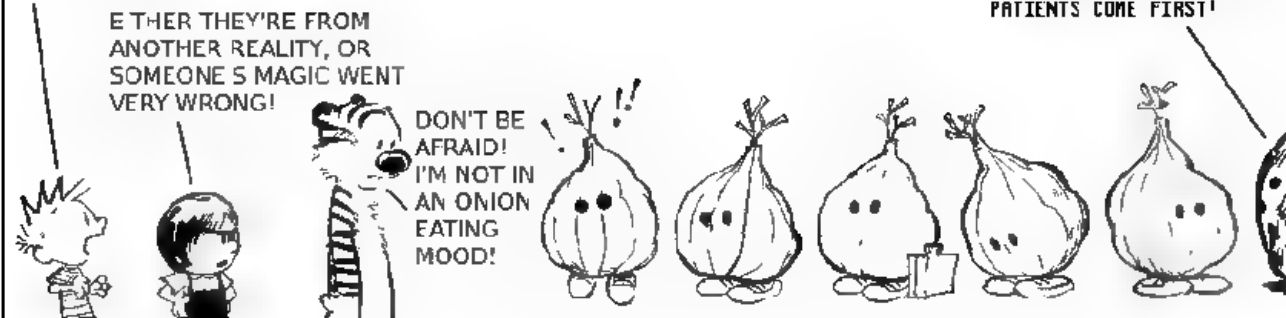


WHAT'S UP WITH ALL THE ON ON PEOPLE N HERE?

EITHER THEY'RE FROM ANOTHER REALITY, OR SOMEONE'S MAGIC WENT VERY WRONG!

DON'T BE AFRAID! I'M NOT IN AN ONION EATING MOOD!

I AM HEALER GHOLZOMPUS. I WILL BE WITH YOU SHORTLY. PROPHECY OR NOT, MY NEW PATIENTS COME FIRST!





MY MAGICAL SCANS INDICATE THAT YOU'RE IN GOOD HEALTH, DESPITE YOUR WORRIES ABOUT BO TRYTTIS LEAF BLIGHT.

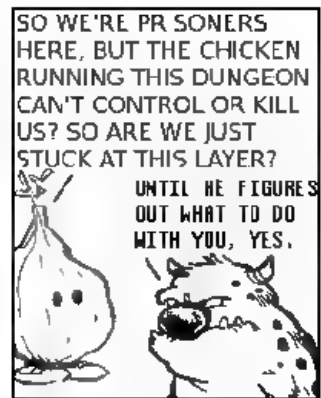
GOOD!



THAT WAS A GOOD CHALLENGE OF MY SKILLS. BUT NOW THAT I KNOW YOU ALL ARE IN GOOD HEALTH, LET ME TURN THINGS OVER TO ZIF

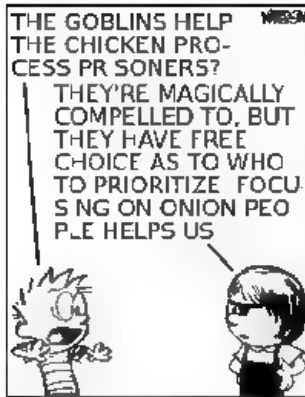


YOU ARE TOO ALIEN FOR YOUR WOULD BE OWNER THE CHICKEN TO TURN YOU INTO BUTT PEOPLE OR FOR HIS BUTT VICEROY TO BRAIN WASH YOU WHILE KEEPING YOUR ORIGINAL FORM. THE CHICKEN A. SO CANNOT EAT YOU WITHOUT RISKING INDIGESTION OR CHOP YOU JP WITH HIS AXE WITH OUT EYE PAIN!



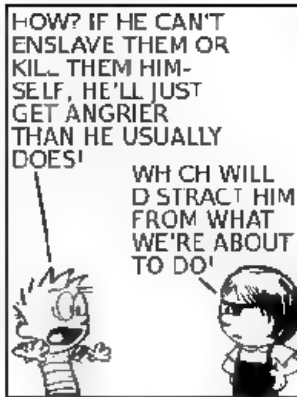
SO WE'RE PRISONERS HERE, BUT THE CHICKEN RUNNING THIS DUNGEON CAN'T CONTROL OR KILL US? SO ARE WE JUST STUCK AT THIS LAYER?

UNTIL HE FIGURES OUT WHAT TO DO WITH YOU, YES.



THE GOBLINS HELP THE CHICKEN PROCESS PRISONERS?

THEY'RE MAGICALLY COMPELLED TO, BUT THEY HAVE FREE CHOICE AS TO WHO TO PRIORITIZE FOCUSING ON ONION PEOPLE HELPS US



HOW? IF HE CAN'T ENSLAVE THEM OR KILL THEM HIMSELF, HE'LL JUST GET ANGRIER THAN HE USUALLY DOES!

WHICH WILL DISTRACT HIM FROM WHAT WE'RE ABOUT TO DO!



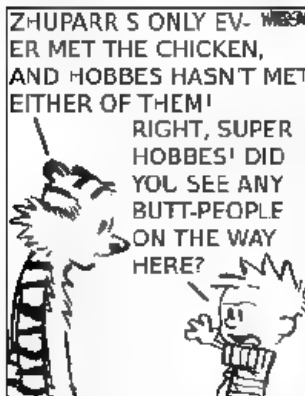
I HOPE IT DOESN'T BACKFIRE!

THERE MUST BE TOO MUCH CHICKEN IN YAL-DABA-AWK! EVEN ONLY AS A TIGER I WAS STILL ABLE TO EAT THINGS LIKE BEETS, WHICH FULL TIGERS CAN'T!



I KNOW THAT, BUT IT DOESN'T HELP US UNLESS SOME OF THE ONION PEOPLE TURN OUT TO BE HOSTILE TO US!

ALSO, WHO'S THE BUTT-VICEROY?



ZHUPARR'S ONLY EVER MET THE CHICKEN, AND HOBBS HASN'T MET EITHER OF THEM!

RIGHT, SUPER HOBBS! DID YOU SEE ANY BUTT-PEOPLE ON THE WAY HERE?



YES! HE'S THEIR LEADER, I GUESS?

THEIR THREE LEADERS IN ONE, MORE LIKE! HE WAS ORIGINALLY THREE GODS IN ONE UNTIL THE CHICKEN INTERVENED!



WAIT! THE CHICKEN DID MUTTER SOMETHING UNDER HIS BREATH ABOUT SOMEBODY WITH SIX EYES AND A FARTING LAUGH, WHO HE COULD CALL "BOOTY PIE!"

A TRIPLE BUTT PERSON WOULD FIT THAT!



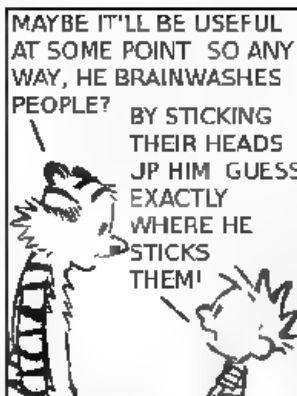
"BOOTY PIE"??

OR "BITSY POOPUMS."



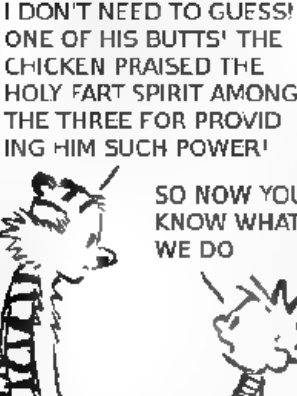
I THINK THAT AFFECTS MY STOMACH MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

DID WE REALLY NEED TO KNOW THAT?!



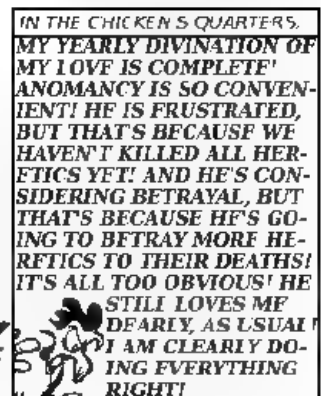
MAYBE IT'LL BE USEFUL AT SOME POINT SO ANYWAY, HE BRAINWASHES PEOPLE?

BY STICKING THEIR HEADS JP HIM GUESS EXACTLY WHERE HE STICKS THEM!

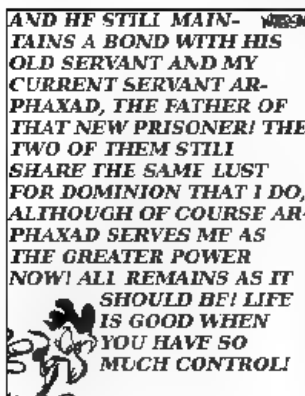


I DON'T NEED TO GUESS! ONE OF HIS BUTTS! THE CHICKEN PRAISED THE HOLY FART SPIRIT AMONG THE THREE FOR PROVIDING HIM SUCH POWER!

SO NOW YOU KNOW WHAT WE DO



IN THE CHICKEN'S QUARTERS, MY YEARLY DIVINATION OF MY LOVE IS COMPLETE! ANOMANCY IS SO CONVENIENT! HE IS FRUSTRATED, BUT THAT'S BECAUSE WE HAVEN'T KILLED ALL HERETICS YET! AND HE'S CONSIDERING BETRAYAL, BUT THAT'S BECAUSE HE'S GOING TO BETRAY MORE HERETICS TO THEIR DEATHS! IT'S ALL TOO OBVIOUS! HE STILL LOVES ME DEARLY, AS USUAL! I AM CLEARLY DOING EVERYTHING RIGHT!



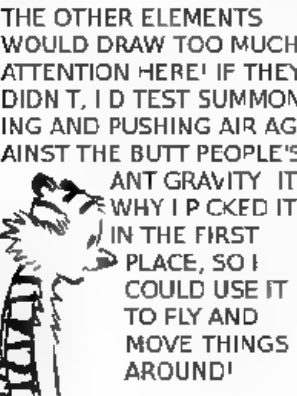
AND HE STILL MAINTAINS A BOND WITH HIS OLD SERVANT AND MY CURRENT SERVANT ARPHAXAD, THE FATHER OF THAT NEW PRISONER! THE TWO OF THEM STILL SHARE THE SAME LUST FOR DOMINION THAT I DO, ALTHOUGH OF COURSE ARPHAXAD SERVES ME AS THE GREATER POWER NOW! ALL REMAINS AS IT SHOULD BE! LIFE IS GOOD WHEN YOU HAVE SO MUCH CONTROL!



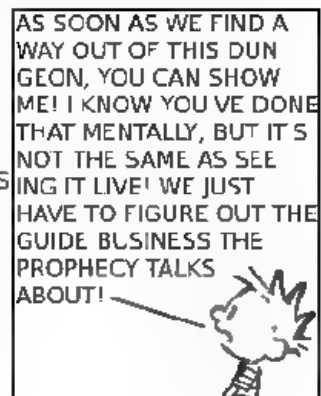
BACK IN THE INFIRMARY

YOU'RE SURE YOUR DISGUISE WORKED BEFORE WE GOT IN HERE?

SURROUNDING MYSELF WITH VOID TO HIDE IS AN EASY POWER!



THE OTHER ELEMENTS WOULD DRAW TOO MUCH ATTENTION HERE! IF THEY DIDN'T, I'D TEST SUMMONING AND PUSHING AIR AGAINST THE BUTT PEOPLE'S ANT GRAVITY IT'S WHY I PICKED IT IN THE FIRST PLACE, SO I COULD USE IT TO FLY AND MOVE THINGS AROUND!



AS SOON AS WE FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS DUNGEON, YOU CAN SHOW ME! I KNOW YOU'VE DONE THAT MENTALLY, BUT IT'S NOT THE SAME AS SEEING IT LIVE! WE JUST HAVE TO FIGURE OUT THE GUIDE BUSINESS THE PROPHECY TALKS ABOUT!

IT'S NOT JUST THE ON ON PEOPLE! THERE'S BEEN TALK OVER THE LAST WEEK THAT THE CHICKEN'S AGENTS HAVE CAPTURED SEVERAL ORCS, INCLUDING JABEZ STONETUSK, THE LEADER OF THE KOTEK CLAN! HE'LL BE EVEN MORE ENRAGED BY HAVING BOTH ORCS AND ON ON PEOPLE AROUND!



ESPECIALLY THE KOTEK CLAN, BECAUSE THEY BREAK TWO COMMANDMENTS. 1111, WHICH BANS WEARING MIXED FABRIC PATTERNS, AND 9758, WHICH BANS DISCO MUSIC AND ANYTHING INFLUENCED BY IT AS THE WORST OF ABOMINATIONS! THEIR SKILL AT DISCO DANCING IS LEGENDARY!



BACK IN THE DAYS OF THE OLD TRINITY, DAD WOULD GO OFF ABOUT HOW HE HATED DISCO MUSIC! BUT, SOMEHOW, HE STILL LIKED THAT "TARZAN BOY" SONG! AND FHE'D KNOWN ABOUT UNCLE MAX AND "KUNG FU FIGHTING," HE'D RANT ABOUT HOW MAX HAD NO TASTE!



AND I THOUGHT USING "QUASAR" AS A SWEAR WORD WAS THE WORST OF ABOMINATIONS!

THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE MORE COMMANDMENTS THAT FALL IN THAT CATEGORY!



UNCLE MAX WAS LUCKY THE COMMANDMENT AGAINST DISCO HADN'T BEEN MADE YET DURING THE H.C.A.V. INCIDENT!

DEFINITELY! ALTHOUGH MOST COMMANDMENTS ARE ONLY ENFORCED CONSISTENTLY IF THE CHICKEN HAS IT IN FOR YOU!



BUT ENOUGH ABOUT THAT HEALER GHOLZOMPLS AND ZIF LOOK LIKE THEY'RE ALMOST DONE WITH THE ONION PEOPLE. ALTHOUGH ZIF LOOKS AS THOUGH HE'S ABOUT TO GIVE US BAD NEWS!



ZAR'NA IS CORRECT. YOUR GLIDE WILL BE DELAYED UNTIL TOMORROW NIGHT DUE TO AN UNFORESEEN TECHNICAL PROBLEM: THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH ZARNIUM-COATED PARTS AVAILABLE WITHOUT HAVING TO MAGICALLY CREATE THEM. IT MAKES AN INTERESTING PUN, AT LEAST!



WHAT'S ZARNIUM, ANYWAY?

AN ALCHEMICAL SUBSTANCE THE GOBLINS USE TO MAKE THINGS INVISIBLE TO MOST FORMS OF SIGHT.



HEALER GHOLZOMPLS IS INFORMING THE CHICKEN THAT YOU AND THE BOY...

HE'S NO OFFICIAL GREMLIN, BUT CALL HIM ZALV'N. HE'S HELPING US ALL.



FINE... YOU AND ZALV'N HAVE COME DOWN WITH A MINOR ILLNESS THAT REQUIRES YOU TO BE ISOLATED FOR A FEW WEEKS AT MINIMUM. THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH TIME FOR YOU TO DO WHAT YOU NEED TO DO.

AFTER DEBRIEFING.



YES ZUNG WILL BE HERE IN A MINUTE TO DEBRIEF YOU AND MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND ALL THAT YOU SHOULD BEFORE YOU FULFILL THE PROPHECY.

THANK YOU, ZIF



DON'T KNOW ENOUGH TO BE SURE WHETHER I WANT TO BE AN OFFICIAL GREMLIN. IT SEEMS TO HAVE WORKED FOR YOU, BUT

I'LL AT LEAST TEACH YOU TO ADDRESS THEM PROPERLY! AND THEY ALSO NEED TO DO BETTER THAN "THE BOY!"



THE DEBRIEFING WENT WELL. SARANNA AND TOLD THEM WHAT WE'D LEARNED FROM THE GHOSTS AND BRIAN. THEN IT GOT MORE INTERESTING

WE HAVE DONE OUR BEST TO ACCOMMODATE YOUR VISION.

WHAT IT LIKELY MEANS?



GOING FAR ENOUGH INTO SPACE WILL GET YOU OUT OF RANGE OF THE CHICKEN AND HIS ARCHONS. "BOB" IS UNABLE TO HELP, UNFORTUNATELY. BOB WAS A PASSENGER ON THEIR CRAFT, WITH NO ENGINEERING SKILLS.

THAT'S A SHAME



AND THAT CRAFT WAS SIGNIFICANTLY DAMAGED, ANYWAY. THERE WAS ONE OTHER OUR FELLOW GREMLINS WERE ABLE TO REPAIR.

LESS TALENT FOR GOBLIN MAGIC MEANS THE CHICKEN'S TETHER BINDS US LESS



AND YOU, WITH YOUR COMPLETE LACK OF IT DUE TO BEING BIOLOGICALLY HUMAN, ARE NOT BOUND BY IT AT ALL.

YES, I REMEMBER, ZUNG. WE'RE BOTH GREMLINS



SARANNA'S HERE IN DEFINITELY, BUT I ONLY HAVE TWO WEEKS LEFT ON MY SENTENCE BEFORE I'M BRAINWASHED OR EXECUTED!

ILLNESS PERMITS EXTENDING SENTENCES BY UP TO A WEEK



THE CHICKEN BELIEVES THAT ALLOWING PRISONERS TO SUFFER FROM ILLNESS WILL MOTIVATE THEM TO JOIN HIM. HIS POWER CAN CURE ANY ILLNESS.



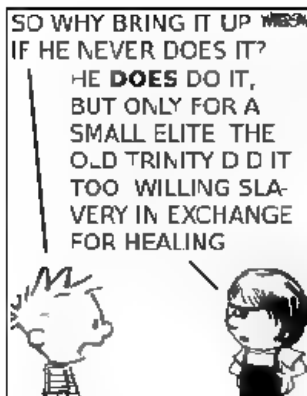
WHY DO YOU EVEN HAVE AN INFIRMARY THEN? WHY IS THERE A HEALTH CARE SYSTEM OUT IN THE WORLD THAT'S REALLY A WAY TO TORTURE AND MURDER PEOPLE? FHE COULD CURE ANYTHING ALL ALONG



HE COULD WHETHER HE DOES IS UP TO HIM. THE DEBRIEFING TAUGHT ME A LOT!

NOW YOU KNOW WHY FREAKED OUT AFTER I LEARNED ABOUT THE SECRET MASS KILLINGS!

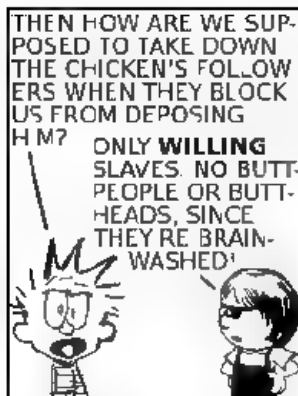




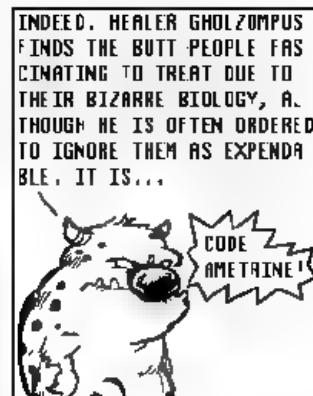
SO WHY BRING IT UP IF HE NEVER DOES IT?
HE **DOES** DO IT, BUT ONLY FOR A SMALL ELITE THE OLD TRINITY DID IT TOO WILLING SLAVERY IN EXCHANGE FOR HEALING



HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT IT WHEN I'VE NEVER HEARD OF IT?
THE CHICKEN GOD WOULD SOMETIMES BRAG ABOUT IT IN MY HEAD AFTER ANNOUNCING A COMMANDMENT I'D BROKEN!

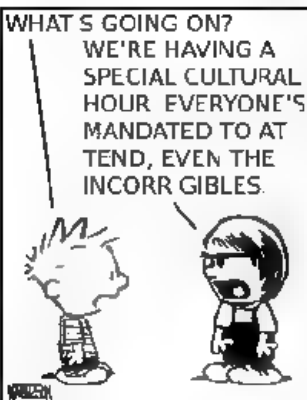


THEN HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO TAKE DOWN THE CHICKEN'S FOLLOWERS WHEN THEY BLOCK US FROM DEPOSING HIM?
ONLY **WILLING** SLAVES. NO BUTT-PEOPLE OR BUTT-HEADS, SINCE THEY'RE BRAIN-WASHED!

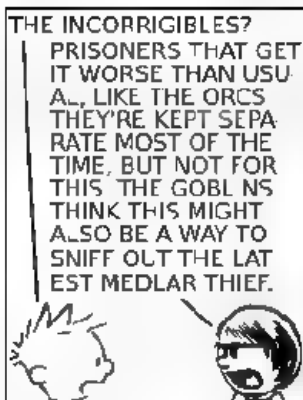


INDEED. HEALER GHOLZOMPUS FINDS THE BUTT PEOPLE FASCINATING TO TREAT DUE TO THEIR BIZARRE BIOLOGY, ALTHOUGH HE IS OFTEN ORDERED TO IGNORE THEM AS EXPENSIBLE. IT IS...

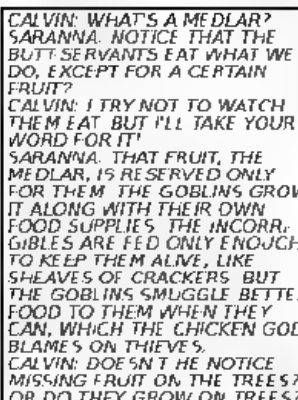
CODE
AMETRAINE!



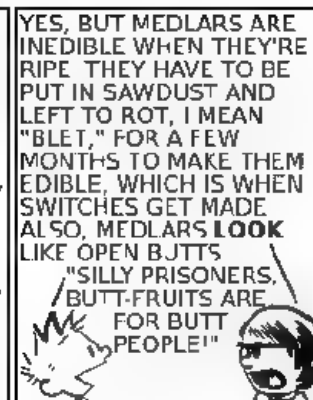
WHAT'S GOING ON? WE'RE HAVING A SPECIAL CULTURAL HOUR EVERYONE'S MANDATED TO ATTEND, EVEN THE INCORRIGIBLES.



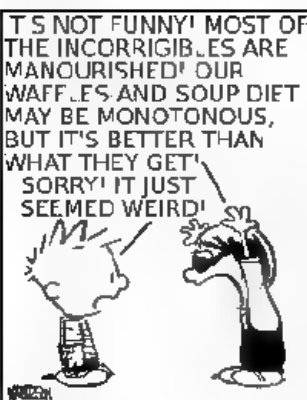
THE INCORRIGIBLES? PRISONERS THAT GET IT WORSE THAN US. AL, LIKE THE ORCS THEY'RE KEPT SEPARATE MOST OF THE TIME, BUT NOT FOR THIS. THE GOBLINS THINK THIS MIGHT ALSO BE A WAY TO SNIFF OUT THE LATEST MEDLAR THIEF.



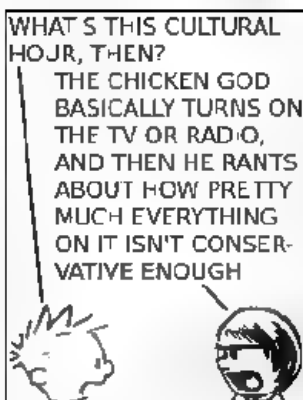
CALVIN: WHAT'S A MEDLAR?
SARANNA: NOTICE THAT THE BUTT-SERVANTS EAT WHAT WE DO, EXCEPT FOR A CERTAIN FRUIT?
CALVIN: I TRY NOT TO WATCH THEM EAT, BUT I'LL TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT!
SARANNA: THAT FRUIT, THE MEDLAR, IS RESERVED ONLY FOR THEM. THE GOBLINS GROW IT ALONG WITH THEIR OWN FOOD SUPPLIES. THE INCORRIGIBLES ARE FED ONLY ENOUGH TO KEEP THEM ALIVE, LIKE SHEAVES OF CRACKERS. BUT THE GOBLINS SMUGGLE BETTER FOOD TO THEM WHEN THEY CAN, WHICH THE CHICKEN GOD BLAMES ON THIEVES.
CALVIN: DOESN'T HE NOTICE MISSING FRUIT ON THE TREES?
OR DO THEY GROW ON TREES?



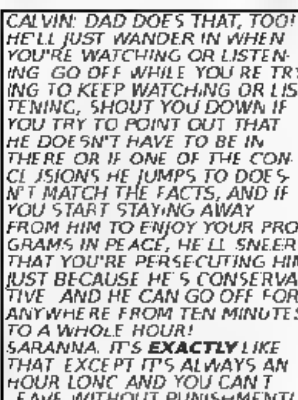
YES, BUT MEDLARS ARE INEDIBLE WHEN THEY'RE RIPE. THEY HAVE TO BE PUT IN SAWDUST AND LEFT TO ROT, I MEAN "BLET," FOR A FEW MONTHS TO MAKE THEM EDIBLE, WHICH IS WHEN SWITCHES GET MADE ALSO. MEDLARS LOOK LIKE OPEN BUTTS. "SILLY PRISONERS. BUTT-FRUIT ARE FOR BUTT PEOPLE!"



IT'S NOT FUNNY! MOST OF THE INCORRIGIBLES ARE MANOURISHED! OUR WAFFLES AND SOUP DIET MAY BE MONOTONOUS, BUT IT'S BETTER THAN WHAT THEY GET! SORRY! IT JUST SEEMED WEIRD!



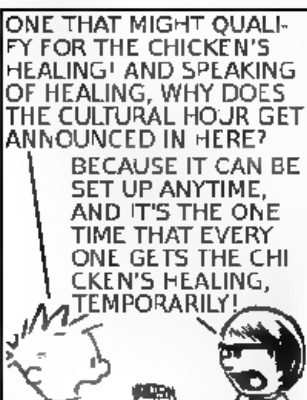
WHAT'S THIS CULTURAL HOUR, THEN?
THE CHICKEN GOD BASICALLY TURNS ON THE TV OR RADIO, AND THEN HE RANTS ABOUT HOW PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING ON IT ISN'T CONSERVATIVE ENOUGH



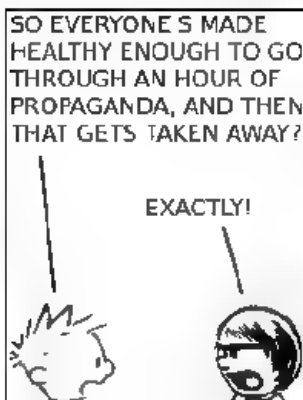
CALVIN: DAD DOES THAT, TOO! HE'LL JUST WANDER IN WHEN YOU'RE WATCHING OR LISTENING GO OFF WHILE YOU'RE TRYING TO KEEP WATCHING OR LISTENING, SHOUT YOU DOWN IF YOU TRY TO POINT OUT THAT HE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE IN THERE OR IF ONE OF THE CONCLUSIONS HE JUMPS TO DOESN'T MATCH THE FACTS, AND IF YOU START STAYING AWAY FROM HIM TO ENJOY YOUR PROGRAMS IN PEACE, HE'LL SNEER THAT YOU'RE PERSECUTING HIM JUST BECAUSE HE'S CONSERVATIVE AND HE CAN GO OFF FOR ANYWHERE FROM TEN MINUTES TO A WHOLE HOUR!
SARANNA: IT'S **EXACTLY** LIKE THAT EXCEPT IT'S ALWAYS AN HOUR LONG AND YOU CAN'T LEAVE WITHOUT PUNISHMENT!



THE INTERESTING BUT IS THAT DAD WAS DOING IT BACK WHEN THE OLD TRINITY WAS STILL RUNNING THINGS!
SO THE CHICKEN GOD MAY HAVE LEARNED IT FROM HIM? WHAT KIND OF FANATIC IS YOUR DAD, ANYWAY?!



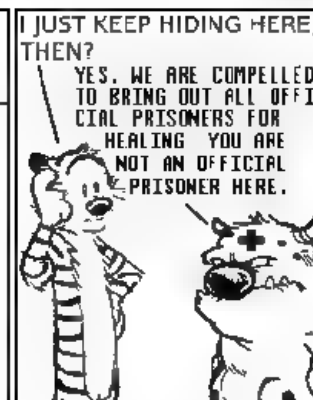
ONE THAT MIGHT QUALIFY FOR THE CHICKEN'S HEALING! AND SPEAKING OF HEALING, WHY DOES THE CULTURAL HOUR GET ANNOUNCED IN HERE?
BECAUSE IT CAN BE SET UP ANYTIME, AND IT'S THE ONE TIME THAT EVERYONE GETS THE CHICKEN'S HEALING, TEMPORARILY!



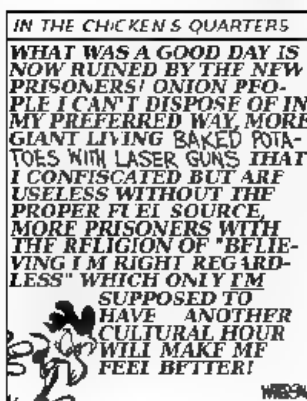
SO EVERYONE'S MADE HEALTHY ENOUGH TO GO THROUGH AN HOUR OF PROPAGANDA, AND THEN THAT GETS TAKEN AWAY?
EXACTLY!



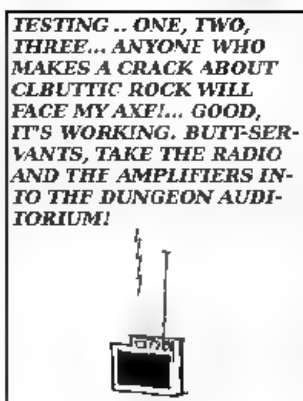
SARANNA AND I STILL HAD TO PRETEND FOR THE OFFICIAL RECORDS SO WE HAD TO WEAR MASKS AND HOLD PUKE BUCKETS FOR A PHOTO OP
CLICK!
I AM **SO** SICK ALL OF A SUDDEN!



I JUST KEEP HIDING HERE, THEN?
YES. WE ARE COMPELLED TO BRING OUT ALL OFFICIAL PRISONERS FOR HEALING. YOU ARE NOT AN OFFICIAL PRISONER HERE.



IN THE CHICKEN'S QUARTERS
WHAT WAS A GOOD DAY IS NOW RUINED BY THE NEW PRISONERS! ONION PEOPLE I CAN'T DISPOSE OF IN MY PREFERRED WAY, MORE GIANT LIVING BAKED POTATOES WITH LASER GUNS THAT I CONFISCATED BUT ARE USELESS WITHOUT THE PROPER FUEL SOURCE. MORE PRISONERS WITH THE RELIGION OF "BELIEVING I'M RIGHT REGARDLESS" WHICH ONLY I'M SUPPOSED TO HAVE. ANOTHER CULTURAL HOUR WILL MAKE ME FEEL BETTER!



TESTING... ONE, TWO, THREE... ANYONE WHO MAKES A CRACK ABOUT CLBUTTIC ROCK WILL FACE MY AXE!... GOOD, IT'S WORKING. BUTT-SERVANTS, TAKE THE RADIO AND THE AMPLIFIERS INTO THE DUNGEON AUDITORIUM!



DING DONG
WHO HAS THE GALL TO RING THE DOORBELL TO MY QUARTERS NOW?! IT HAD BETTER BE SOMEONE WORTHY OF MY ATTENTION!



BE OF GOOD CHEER, MY LORD! I'M HERE TO SEE HOW MY SON IS DOING! PLEASE TELL ME HE'S BEHAVED! EVER SINCE RHON FAILED YOU, I'VE BEEN CONCERNED FOR HIS MORAL FIBER, SINCE HE'S THE ONE MEMBER OF MY FAMILY WHOM YOU CAN STILL REDEEM!

IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU, MY GLORIOUS SERVANT! BUT YOU SHOULD CALL YOUR FORMER WIFE RHONDA. R-H-O-N, SOUNDS LIKE R-O-N, WHICH WILL MAKE OTHERS THINK YOU WERE A MALE-MALE PAIR INSTEAD OF A PROPERLY CONSERVATIVE MALE-FEMALE PAIR, THE ONLY TRUE PAIR!



FORGIVE ME, MY LORD, FOR USING HER PREFERRED NICKNAME INSTEAD OF YOUR PREFERRED FULL NAME FOR HER! IS SHE DOING WELL AS A PROPER MEMBER OF YOUR BUTT-ARMY?



SHE DIED ON HER FIRST MISSION HER TELEKINESIS WAS TOO WEAK TO DEFLECT ATTACKS. TOO WEAK TO SERVE ME IN HUMAN FORM, TOO WEAK TO SERVE ME IN BUTT-FORM. THINGS END UP THAT WAY FAR TOO OFTEN.



THOUGHT SHE WAS STRONGER WHEN I MARRIED HER. IT'S A SHAME AT LEAST SHE DIED HONORABLY SERVING YOU, EVEN THOUGH SHE FAILED YOU TWICE ONCE WITH HER OWN WILL, AND ONCE WITH HER WILL OVERRIDDEN WITH YOURS I WILL NOT FAIL!



YOU MAY DROP THE PRAISEFUL GESTURE, FOR I SENSE YOUR FULL DEVOTION THE BUTT-VICEROY DIRECTED RHONDA AS WELL, BUT HE COULD ONLY HELP SO MUCH. BUT TO GET BACK TO YOUR SON HE HAS YET TO MAKE THE DECISION TO SERVE ME OR BE DESTROYED, AND HE'S BEEN TALKING TO ONE OF THE LONG-TERM SPECIAL PRISONERS FOR THE LAST TWO DAYS!



THANK YOU, MY LORD! IT SOUNDS AS THOUGH CALVIN MAY BE WAFFLING, BUT THERE'S STILL TIME FOR HIM TO TAKE THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW PATH IF ONLY RHONDA AND I HAD STUCK TO OUR ORIGINAL PLAN AND HAD A SECOND CHILD!



HE WOULD HAVE LIKELY BEEN AN EVEN BETTER SERVANT, YES, BUT YOU CAN SEE YOUR SON SOON, BECAUSE THERE'S JUST ABOUT TO BE A CULTURAL HOUR THAT HE'S OBLIGATED TO ATTEND!



GLORY TO THE CONSERVATIVE CULTURE OF CHICKEN DOM!

I'LL JOIN YOU IN THE AUDITORIUM FOR CULTURAL HOUR MOMENTARILY. I NEED TO CHECK IN WITH MY OLD FRIEND THE BUTT VICEROY FIRST, THOUGH!



ENJOY! I'LL SEE YOU SOON!

IN THE BUTT-VICEROY'S QUARTERS, BEHIND CLOSED DOORS LIKE ST CYPRIAN OF ANTIIOCH, I RETURN TO YOU WITH GOOD TIDINGS IF ONLY MY ST JUSTINA HAD COOPERATED



DO NOT TAKE UP NECROMANCY LIKE HIM!

YOUR MIND SHIELD STILL HOLDS. BIG Y SUSPECTS NOTHING OF ME



GOOD I GET STRONGER EVERY DAY!



SERVE YOU, THE TRINITY!

YOUR HAVING REGAINED THE ABILITY TO SPEAK IN NON FARTS PROVES STRENGTH, MY TRJE LORD!



IT IS HARD. I DO NOT SOUND AS IMPRESSIVE AS I USED TO!

IF ANYONE LAUGHS AT YOUR NEW VOICE ONCE YOU REVEAL YOURSELF, I'LL HELP YOU TORTURE THEM! ("THANKS STILL SO WEAK!")*



* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

("I'VE TRACKED DOWN ALL THE POOP GHOSTS AND SOY GHOSTS THAT MY EX-LOVE GAVE EXTRA POWER TO, AND ABSORBED THAT POWER ALONG WITH THEIR SPIRITUAL ENERGY WHEN THE BARRIER WEAKENED AROUND HALLOWEEN! THEY'RE HOLLOWED OUT!")



* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

YES, I REMEMBER YOU EFFECTIVELY EXORCISED THE FOUR HEALERS, SATAN, OTHERS, AND ONE WHOM YOU FOUND FAMILIAR BUT COULDN'T IDENTIFY BRAG OF IT AGAIN AND BE PROUD!



IT WAS ALL PERFECTLY LEGAL!

AND THEIR ACTUAL SPIRITS ARE IN THE REALM OF LOST SOULS, OUTSIDE OUR JURISDICTION! NO ONE CAN TRULY DEFEAT THREE!



YES! SO YOU MUST CONTINUE THE PLAN! KEEP INGRATIATING YOURSELF TO HIM UNTIL HE GIVES YOU ULTIMATE POWER THEN.

STRIKE! YES! I'M ALMOST DONE PROCESSING THE EXTRA POWER! HE WILL SERVE ME THEN!

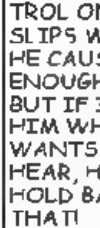


THE BIG Y IS SUCH A BIRDBRAIN, HE DOESN'T REALIZE ALL THE PEOPLE YOU BRAINWASHED SERVE YOU AND NOT HIM!



HA HA HA!

IF ONLY THE BUTT ARMY WERE MINE, TOO! BUT WITH ENOUGH BRUTE FORCE, IT WILL BE! WE ONLY HAVE TO PRETEND FOR A LITTLE LONGER! MY CONTROL ONLY SLIPS WHEN HE CAUSES ME ENOUGH PAIN, BUT IF I TELL HIM WHAT HE WANTS TO HEAR, HE'LL HOLD BACK FROM THAT!



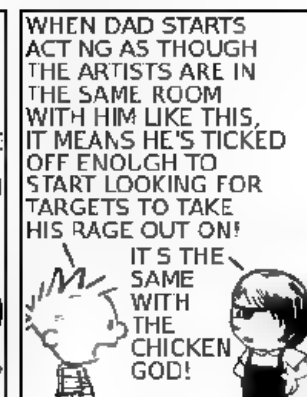
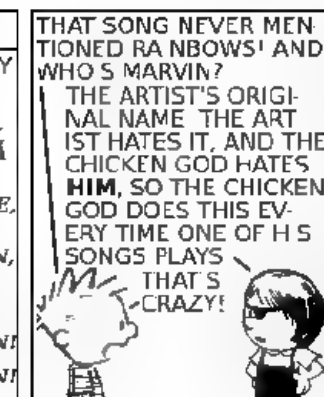
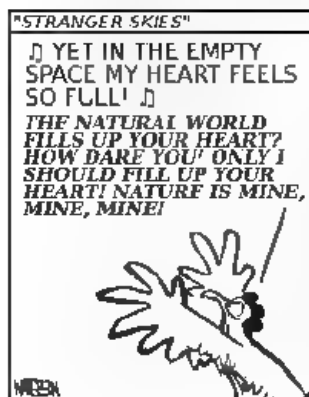
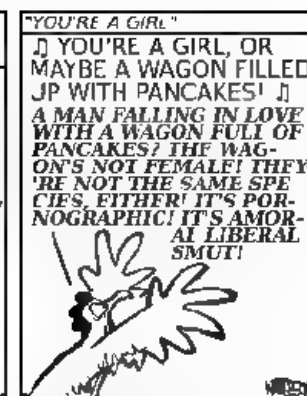
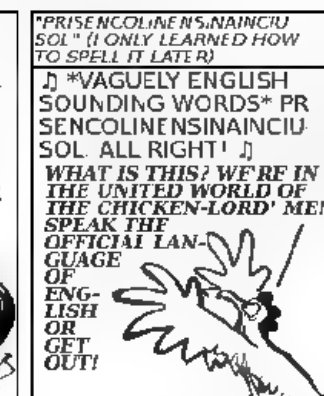
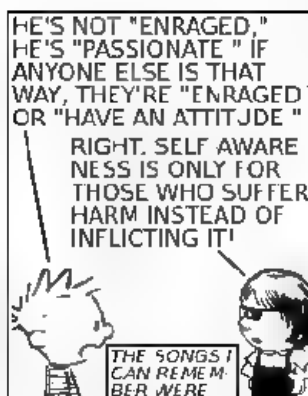
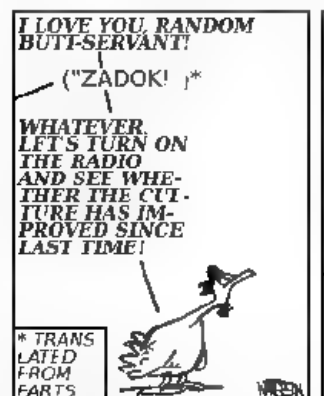
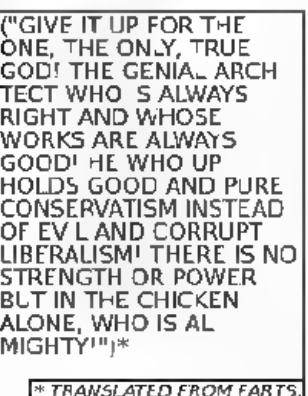
HOPEFULLY SO BUT I CAN'T STAY I HAVE TO CHECK ON MY SON, AND ENJOY ONE OF BIG Y'S CULTURAL HOURS!

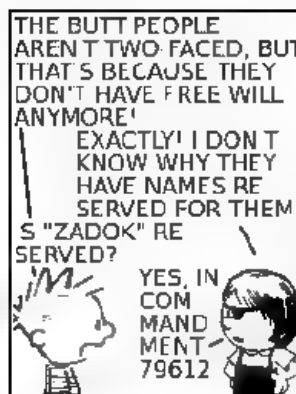
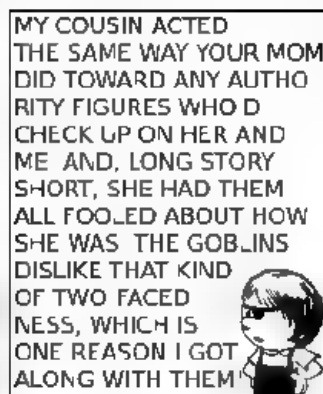
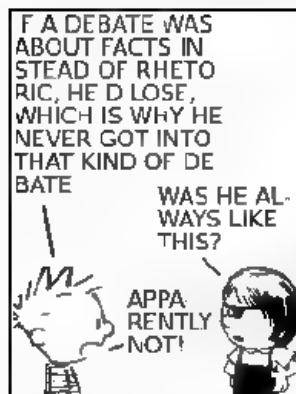
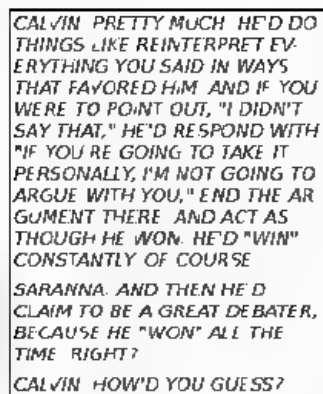
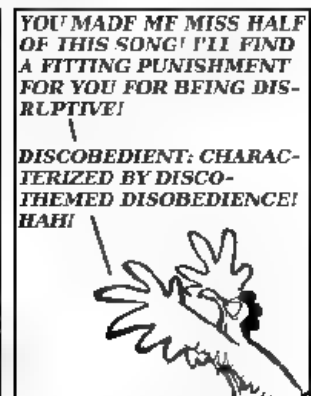
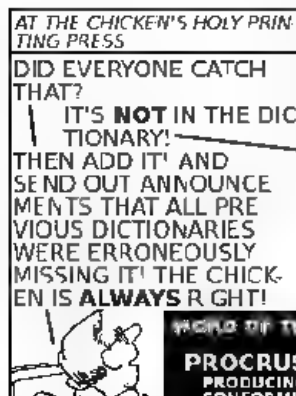
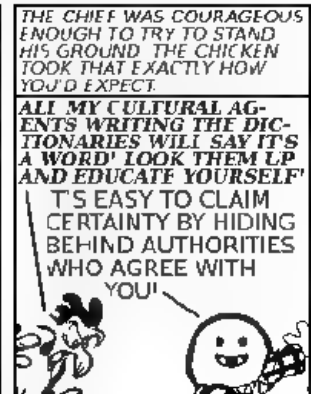
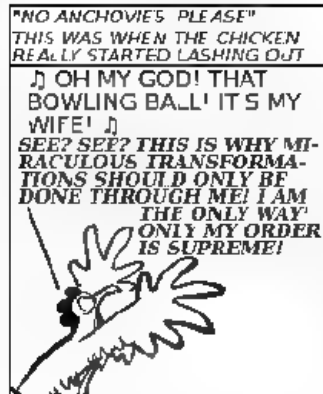
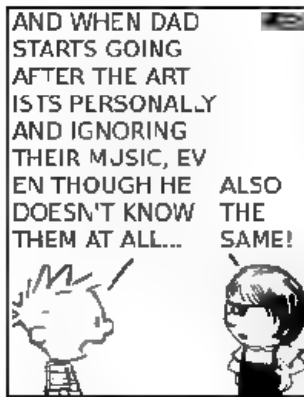


THERE'S NO RUSH LIKE THAT OF MAKING EVERYONE OTHER THAN YOURSELF YOUR MORAL INFERRORS! YES! EVEN RHONDA NEVER MADE ME FEEL SO GOOD!

AND YOU WERE THE ONE WHO GAVE HIM THE IDEA FOR IT! HOW DELICIOUSLY IRONIC! I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE HIS FACE WHEN CHRISTIANITY RULES AGAIN!







MELVILLE FROM THAT ALTERNATE FUTURE ACTS JUST LIKE YOUR DAD IN TERMS OF DOING THE OPPOSITE OUT OF SPITE, ALTHOUGH HE USES "YOU REALLY TRIED!" AS HIS FAVORITE PHRASE! SO A MORE SARCASTIC DAD JUNIOR, AND SOMEONE NOT TO BECOME RIGHT!



"TRACKING TREASURE DOWN" THE CHICKEN SEEMED TO CALM DOWN WITH THIS SONG. HE ASSUMED IT WAS PRAISING HIM BECAUSE HE ONLY PAID ATTENTION TO THE CHORUS, BUT IF THAT KEPT HIM FROM TARGETING PEOPLE, I DIDN'T MIND.

♪ AT THE SAME TIME (AT THE SAME TIME), YOU KEEP TRACKING TREASURE DOWN! ♪

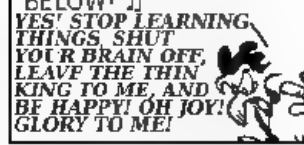
FINALLY, SOMETHING GOOD! YOUR ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH IS ONE OF THE TRUE WAYS TO GAIN MY FAVOR! YES! MORE!



"NO BRAIN, NO PAIN" THIS WAS SYNCHRONICITY: A SONG BY ONE OF THE ARTISTS MENTIONED IN THAT BOOK OF BARDIC PROVERBS I'D FOUND IN THE GHOST LIBRARY IT WAS ATYPICAL OF THE GROUP'S USUAL FARE BUT AGAIN THE CHICKEN PAID ONLY SUPERFICIAL ATTENTION.

♪ DON'T TRY TO RISE ABOVE IT, IT'S BETTER BELOW! ♪


YES! STOP LEARNING THINGS, SHUT YOUR BRAIN OFF, LEAVE THE THINKING TO ME, AND BE HAPPY! OH JOY! GLORY TO ME!



"DEAD END" THE NEXT SONG WAS ALSO BY AN ARTIST FROM THAT BOOK OF BARDIC PROVERBS. AND UNDER AN ALIAS, SHE'D ALSO MADE ANOTHER SONG THE MUSIC VIDEO FOR WHICH HAD HELPED CALL ZHUPARR.

I HOPED MY FACIAL EXPRESSION DIDN'T GIVE AWAY MY SHOCK BUT THE CHICKEN HAD GONE BACK TO RAGE MODE.

WHAT? SHE CHANGED HER GIVEN NAME TO THAT NON-CONSERVATIVE GIVEN NAME? AND HY-PHENATED HER MARRIED SURNAME?!



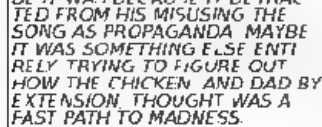
JUST LIKE DAD, HE'D FINALLY GOTTEN ENRAGED ENOUGH TO START GOING OFF ON THE ARTIST PERSONALLY IGNORING THE MUSIC.

A WOMAN HY-PHENATING HER NAME OR KEEPING HER MAIDEN NAME IS NOT CONSERVATIVE! HER GIVING UP HER NAME FOR HER HUSBAND'S IS THE PROPER SIGN OF HER STARTING A FAMILY! CORRUPTION FROM FEMINIST LIBERALS LEADING TO THE END OF SOCIETY! *BLAH BLAH RANT RANT* LIBERALS! *RANT RANT* LIBERALS! *BLAH* LIBERALS!



DAD HAD RANTED THE SAME WAY ON THE SUBJECT I'VE NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHY IT'S SUCH A BIG DEAL TO SOME PEOPLE WHAT OTHER PEOPLE DECIDE TO CALL THEMSELVES.

ALSO, THE PREVIOUS SONG WAS PARTIALLY SUNG BY A MAN WHO HAD CHANGED HIS SURNAME AND YET THE CHICKEN DIDN'T MAKE A PEEP ABOUT THAT. MAYBE IT WAS BECAUSE IT WAS A MAN AND NOT A WOMAN. MAYBE IT WAS BECAUSE IT DETRACTED FROM HIS MISUSING THE SONG AS PROPAGANDA. MAYBE IT WAS SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW THE CHICKEN AND DAD BY EXTENSION, THOUGHT WAS A FAST PATH TO MADNESS.



THE SONG WAS ALMOST OVER BEFORE THE CHICKEN FINALLY NOTICED THE LYRICS.

♪ I KEEP GIVING YOU MY LOVE ♪

WHAT'S THAT? "I CAN GET THAT HUMAN LOVE..."? THIS SONG IS ENCOURAGING LOVE BETWEEN HUMANS AND NON-HUMANS! INTERSPECIES MISCEGENATION IS NOT CONSERVATIVE!



SOME OF THE BUTT SERVANTS, AS WELL AS THE BUTT VICE ROY HIMSELF, HAD BEEN GUARDING THE AUDITORIUM EXITS. I WAS SURPRISED TO HEAR THE LATTER SUDDENLY SPEAK UP, OR SHOULD I SAY FART UP.

("MY LORD, YOU SHOULD RECONSIDER, GIVEN THE REST OF THE SONG")*


* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS



("LOSING LOVE IS AN IMPORTANT THING SHE IS SAYING, 'I KEEP...")*

* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS.

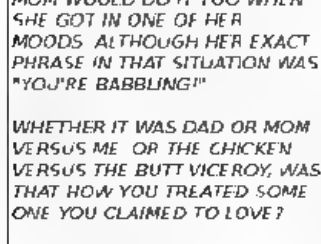
YOU'RE TELLING ME LIKE I CARE!



THERE IT WAS. DAD'S EXACT PHRASE THAT HE'D USE WHEN HE KNEW HE WAS RIGHT, REGARDLESS OF THE FACTS.

MOM WOULD DO IT TOO WHEN SHE GOT IN ONE OF HER MOODS. ALTHOUGH HER EXACT PHRASE IN THAT SITUATION WAS "YOU'RE BABBLING!"

WHETHER IT WAS DAD OR MOM VERSUS ME OR THE CHICKEN VERSUS THE BUTT VICEROY, WAS THAT HOW YOU TREATED SOMEONE YOU CLAIMED TO LOVE?



("THIS IS WHY DO WHAT I DO NEVER CHANGE!")*

* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

THE LAST TWO FARTED WORDS SOJND'D SARCASTIC BUT THAT WAS LOST ON THE CHICKEN



THE IDEA THAT THE CHICKEN WAS SO MUCH LIKE MY DAD IN SOME WAYS BRIEFLY MADE ME WONDER IF THE BUTT VICEROY WOULD HAVE LOVED DAD INSTEAD OF THE CHICKEN. BEFORE I BANISHED SUCH A DISTURBING THOUGHT FROM MY MIND EVEN IF I HADN'T THE CHICKEN'S NEXT SHOUT WOULD HAVE BANISHED IT ANYWAY.

LOVING OUTSIDE YOUR OWN SPECIES CONTAMINATING YOUR PURITY, BRINGING FILTH INTO MY CIVILIZED WORLD! ORC, LOOK AT ME!



PROVE TO ME YOU'RE A FULL ORC, AND NOT ONE OF THOSE EVIL MIXED BRFEDS! WHERE'S YOUR PEDIGREE?

YOU DESTROYED IT WHEN YOU BROUGHT ME AND MY CLAN MEMBERS HERE! SO YOU CAN'T PROVE IT! STOP MAKING EXCUSES!



THE CHICKEN PONDERED FOR A SECOND. SHAKING WITH ANGER, AND SUDDENLY MAGICALLY SHOUTED IN EVERYONE'S EARS IT WASN'T TELEPATHY. WHICH BOTH I AND SARANNA WERE IMMUNE TO NOW BUT FORCED HEARING.

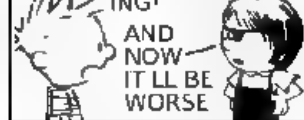
I HEREBY DECLARE TWO NEW COMMANDMENTS! 489231 THOU SHALT USE "DISOBEYIENCF" AS AN OFFICIAL WORD! AND 489232 THOU SHALT TREAT ORCS WHO CANNOT PROVE PURE ORCISH ANCESTRY AS PRODUCTS OF MISCEGENATION! AS I HAVE DECLARED IT, SO SHALL IT BE!



WHAT DOES BEING PRODUCTS OF MISCEGENATION MEAN?

IT'S MIXING HUMAN BASELINE AND NON HUMAN BASELINE. IT MEANS THEY GET EVEN LESS FOOD YOU SAID THEY WERE ALREADY MALNOURISHED AND STARVING!

AND NOW IT'LL BE WORSE




AND I'M ALSO MAKING A NEW RULE! FOR BEING THE ONE TO INSPIRE A NEW COMMANDMENT, IABEZ STONETUSK, YOUR REMAINING SENTENCE IS SHORTENED! SINCE YOU CAN'T BE ENSLAVED, YOU'LL BE EXECUTED IN ONE DAY INSTEAD OF TWO MORE WEEKS!

WHA! KILL ME THEN, YOU COWARD!



FOR YOUR INSOLENCE, YOU'RE LUCKY I DON'T EXECUTE YOU RIGHT HERE AND NOW! BUTT-SERVANTS! REMOVE THE INCORRIGIBLES' FOOD CHEST FOR THE NEXT TWO DAYS!

DO YOUR WORST!




THE CHICKEN CLARED AT THE OTHER ORCS OF THE KOTEK CLAN. APPARENTLY HE DIDN'T LIKE THE WAY ONE OF THE ORCS EYED THE CHEST AS IT LEFT THEIR SIGHT, AND LASHED OUT AGAIN.

ORC! YOU MAKE A RUN FOR IT, I'LL BREAK YOUR ARM!



GUESS INCORRIGIBLES DON'T GET GOOD MEDICAL CARE FOR BROKEN LIMBS?

OR FOR MUCH ELSE THE CHICKEN GOD KEEPS THEM ALIVE, BUT NOT MUCH BEYOND THAT YOU'D BE SURPRISED WHAT YOU CAN LIVE THROUGH



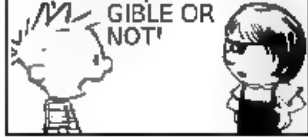
AS ARBITRARY AND SELF-SERVING AS HE IS, HE'S NEVER CUT THE LENGTH OF A SENTENCE BEFORE, THOUGH! WE NEED TO GET OUT A.S.A.P!

REALLY? A LAWMAKER'S ABANDONING ALL RESTRAINTS ON HIMSELF AS SOON AS HE GETS IN A BAD MOOD ISN'T HOW THINGS WORK?



UNLESS SOMEONE'S HOLDING THEIR LEASH, ANY WAY?

NOT CHANGING SENTENCES IS ONE OF THE FEW THINGS HE'S ACTUALLY STUCK TO! NOT ANY MORE IT SEEMS! BAD FOR ALL THE PRISONERS, INCORRIGIBLE OR NOT!



I DIDN'T KNOW THE SOON-TO-BE EXECUTED ORC CHIEF, AND SARANNA ONLY KNEW OF HIM DUE TO THE ORIGINAL TIES BETWEEN GOBLINS AND ORCS BUT THIS WAS EVEN MORE UNFAIR THAN USUAL.

YEARS LATER, WHEN ALL THIS WAS OVER AND THE CHICKEN GOD WAS LONG DETHRONED THERE WAS A PETITION FOR A "DISCOBEDIENCE DAY" TO REMEMBER THROUGH DANCE ALL THE INCORRIGIBLES WHO DIED DUE TO THE CHICKEN'S VENGEFUL PETTINESS WHICH I GLADLY SIGNED

EVEN DAD WAS NEVER THIS BAD. I BRIEFLY WONDERED WHETHER THE CHICKEN HAD BEEN INSPIRED BY SOMEONE EVEN WORSE OR HAD COME UP WITH THIS BEHAVIOR ON HIS OWN. BUT DID IT REALLY MATTER?

DAD HAD NO PROBLEM ENABLING IT, THOUGH.

I'M NOT RACIST, BUT PLACES RUN BY ORC DESCENDED PEOPLE NEVER DO AS WELL AS PLACES RUN BY FULLY HUMAN DESCENDED PEOPLE!



THEY'RE GETTING WHAT THEY DESERVE. I ONLY HOPE MY SON DOESN'T SYMPATHIZE WITH SUCH LOWER CLASS TYPES! I RAISED HIM TO DO BETTER THAN THAT!

I DON'T THINK HE SAW WHERE I WAS IN THE AUDIENCE YET. JUST IN CASE, I KEPT UP A NEUTRAL EXPRESSION.



I THINK THE HOUR'S JUST ABOUT UP.

WHICH MEANS WE'LL HAVE TO PRETEND TO BE SICK AS SOON AS THE HEALING AURA WEARS OFF! BUT SINCE DAD'S HERE, HE'S GOING TO WANT TO CHECK UP ON ME!

RIGHT! CATCH UP WITH ME AS SOON AS YOU CAN.



THE INCORRIGIBLES WERE LED AWAY, THE CHIEF DEFIANTLY DISCO DANCING ON HIS WAY OUT.

APPARENTLY THE CHICKEN GAVE EVERYONE A FIVE-MINUTE GRACE PERIOD ON THE HEALING AURA. HOW HE COULD BE SO GENEROUS ONE MINUTE AND SO UNPREDICTABLE THE NEXT WAS A QUESTION I WAS NEVER ABLE TO ANSWER.

DAD FINALLY NOTICED ME, AND MADE HIS WAY TO ME AS SARANNA HEADED FOR THE INFIRMARY AGAIN.

HELLO, CALVIN. I TRUST YOU'RE LEARNING HOW TO BEHAVE PROPERLY? WE MUST ALL GROW UP SOMETIME!

OF COURSE I AM! I CAN SEE WHAT MISBEHAVING WILL GET ME!



WHY ARE YOU SO NEGATIVE? DON'T YOU SEE THE BENEFITS OF OBEYING THE RIGHT AUTHORITIES? THE ONLY REAL WAY TO ADVANCE IS TO DO THAT!

YES, SIR!

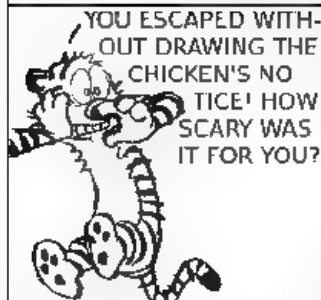


I TOLD HIM WHAT HE WANTED TO HEAR. FROM PAST EXPERIENCE, HE'D EITHER BUY IT AND GET SO PLEASED WITH HIMSELF THAT HE'D IGNORE ME OR HE'D LATCH ONTO SOME REASON (REAL OR NOT) TO TEAR INTO ME REGARDLESS. I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH THAT HE BOUGHT IT THIS TIME. DID HE EXPECT SOMEONE HE HAD THROWN IN A DUNGEON TO BE HONEST WITH HIM AT ALL?

IT REMINDED ME OF ANOTHER LINE IN THAT BOOK OF BARDIC WISDOM: "I'D RATHER STAY A CHILD AND KEEP MY SELF-RESPECT IF BEING AN ADULT MEANS BEING LIKE YOU."

I DIDN'T HAVE DAD'S UNLIMITED CAPACITY FOR TWO-FACEDNESS, THOUGH. IT WAS A RELIEF TO GET BACK TO THE INFIRMARY.

YOU ESCAPED WITHOUT DRAWING THE CHICKEN'S NOTICE! HOW SCARY WAS IT FOR YOU?



NOT AS SCARY AS THE WORLD WE'LL HAVE IF HE WINS, ESPECIALLY WITH PEOPLE LIKE DAD AT HIS SIDE AND FREELY SERVING HIM! BUT SARANNA, HAVE YOU HAD TO DEAL WITH YOUR COUSIN SINCE YOU GOT HERE?



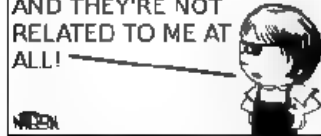
NOT MUCH. THE CHICKEN GOD MADE HER BREEDING STOCK, AND THE RECORDS SAY SHE DIED IN CHILDBIRTH AFTER A WHILE. SO MY ONLY LIVING FAMILY OTHER THAN MY SO-CALLED PARENTS ARE A HORDE OF BUTT COUSINS ONCE REMOVED!



AND SINCE YOUR COUSIN WAS TRANSFORMED, DO THEY EVEN REALLY COUNT AS YOUR FAMILY?



GOOD QUESTION! A BETTER ONE IS, CONSIDERING HOW THEY ALL TREAT ME, DO THEY COUNT AS MY FAMILY AT ALL JUST BECAUSE THEY'RE RELATED TO ME BY BLOOD? THE GOBLINS TREAT ME MORE LIKE FAMILY THAN THAT, AND THEY'RE NOT RELATED TO ME AT ALL!



AND HOW DO PEOPLE LIKE MY DAD AND YOUR COUSIN THINK THE WAY THEY DO? "I'M GOING TO CLAIM CERTAINTY! I SAY I KNOW THINGS THAT I CAN'T POSSIBLY KNOW! AND WHERE DID I GET SUCH CERTAINTY?"



SARANNA-VISION: BACK TO THAT ALTERNATE FUTURE DIMENSION IN SPACE. SERIOUSLY, GET A MOVE ON AND GET OUT OF HERE!

"I PULLED IT OUT OF MY THIN AIR!"



THIN AIR! DON'T SAY YOU PULLED SOMETHING OUT OF YOUR BUTT UNLESS YOU MEAN IT'S TRUE! THE MEANING CHANGED WHEN THE CHICKEN AMASSED A BIG ENOUGH BUTT ARMY!



REALLY? SO THAT'S WHY DAD FLIPPED OUT THAT ONE TIME WHEN HE SAID, "THE TRUTH I PULLED OUT OF MY BUTT WILL SET YOU FREE." AND DIDN'T THINK HE WAS SERIOUS!



SO WHEN YOUR UNCLE MAX CALLED THOSE PEOPLE BRAINWASHED BY THE BUTT VICEROY "BUTTHEADS," THEY WOULD TAKE THAT AS A COMPLIMENT?



MY ZHUPARR'S... MOTHER HAD A SAYING: "IF I PUT A LOADED GUN TO YOUR HEAD, PREDICT YOU'RE GOING TO DIE. AND PULL THE TRIGGER, IT DOESN'T MAKE ME A CLARVOYANT." AND SHE'D KNOW! SHE WAS A CLARVOYANT!



SPEAKING OF TRUTH, MY SARANNA VISION JUST GAVE ME ANOTHER WARNING, SAYING WE NEED TO LEAVE SOONER RATHER THAN LATER! LET ME DOUBLE CHECK!



THE TWO MOST LIKELY POSSIBILITIES ARE SURELY A LOT LESS FUZZY! CAN SOMEONE CALL SHAMAN GHEFZARAL? THIS IS IMPORTANT!



LUCKILY, THE SHAMAN WASN'T FAR AWAY AND A VISION THAT REQUIRED SARANNA TO DROP THE EYEPATCH WAS DEFINITELY IMPORTANT

I WILL ASSIST YOU WITH MEDITATION, WHICH SHOULD CLEAR THEM UP MORE. WHAT DO THE TWO HAVE IN COMMON, IF ANYTHING?



BOTH OF THEM LEAVE THE CHICKEN GOD DE-THRONE!

GOOD! WHAT OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM? IN ONE OF THE TWO, HE'S REPLACED BY SOMEONE EVEN WORSE



FOCUS ON YOUR BREATHING, AND ON THE UNIQUE PULSE OF THIS REALITY. SHADOWS ARE NECESSARY, FOR THEY KEEP REALITY FROM BECOMING A HELL OF BLINDING LIGHT. BUT TOO MANY SHADOWS MAKE REALITY A HEAVEN OF SOMETHING DARK, NESS AND CONCEAL TOO MUCH. SEEK TRUE BALANCE.



THE SHAMAN WENT ON THAT WAY FOR A BIT LONGER AND SARANNA WHO HAD APPARENTLY DONE THIS MEDITATION BEFORE BREATHED AND CHANTED IN WHAT I FOUND OUT LATER WAS THE GOBLINS' ORIGINAL LANGUAGE. SOON SHE FOUND WHAT SHE WAS LOOKING FOR

THE DIFFERENCE LIES IN WHETHER WE GET FOLLOWED!



MY VISION SAYS WE NEED TO GO INTO SPACE IF WE HAVE FULL STEALTH, AN ENEMY TAKES DOWN THE CHICKEN AND ONE OF HIS UNDERLINGS TAKES OVER!



BUT IF WE DON'T HAVE FULL STEALTH, THAT ENEMY FOLLOWS US, THE CHICKEN WARS WITH ONE OF HIS UNDERLINGS, AND THEIR FIGHT ENDS WITH NEITHER ONE SURVIVING!



OR IS IT BOTH SURVIVING? THAT PARTICULAR SHADOW REFUSES TO MOVE! AND ELDRITCH POWER TAKES DOWN WHOEVER'S IN CHARGE, BUT WHETHER THE WORLD REMAINS LIVABLE DEPENDS ON AN UNLIKELY PARTNERSHIP AT THE RIGHT TIME!



IT'S EXHAUSTING. I NEED TO PUT THE EYEPATCH BACK ON AND TAKE A BREAK!

YOU'VE DONE WELL. I CAN SENSE THE TRUTH OF THIS REST.



PARDON ME, SHAMAN GHEFZARAL, BUT IF YOU CAN SENSE TRUTH, HOW DID THE CHICKEN ENSLAVE YOUR KIND?



CONSENT CAN BE WEAPONIZED, WITH MANY LOOP-HOLES.



I LOOKED INTO WHAT HE MEANT AFTER THE CHICKEN WAS TAKEN CARE OF. A FEW ORC PHILOSOPHERS WERE MORE THAN WILLING TO FILL ME IN TOO

"NO MEANS NO, YES MEANS YES, AND I CAN REVOKE THAT ANYTIME" TURNED INTO "I DON'T HAVE TO SAY YES AND MEAN YES IF I DON'T WANT TO." "I CAN SAY YES AND INSTANTLY CHANGE MY MIND WITHOUT NOTICE," AND "I SAID YES, BUT I CHANGED MY MIND RETROACTIVELY BY SAYING I FELT THREATENED"

THERE WERE EVEN MORE LOOPHOLES THAN THOSE, BUT EX-SHAMAN GHIMZUROS HAD TURNED FINDING WAYS TO FEE, THREATENED INTO AN ART FORM IN HIS LONG GAME OF SELLING HIS OWN PEOPLE TO THE CHICKEN

A GAME WHICH ENDED WITH HIM SCREAMING AT THE CHICKEN "YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME! WE HAD A DEAL!" AND A FATE NO ONE WANTED TO DESCRIBE TO ME. FOR BOTH HIM AND HIS FOLLOWERS



WIZARD SUNFLARE'S INFORMED CONSENT, OR THE GOBLINS' EQUIVALENT OF IT, WAS A MUCH BETTER WAY BUT THEY COULD ONLY MAKE FULL USE OF IT ONCE THEY WERE NO LONGER SLAVES, AND IT WAS MY JOB TO MAKE SURE THAT CAME TO BE



THE VERY END OF THE DEBRIEFING WAS INTERRUPTED. SHAMAN, IF YOU ARE DONE, I MUST CONTINUE WITH IT.

I AM. DO YOUR DUTY WELL, ZUNG.



YOUR GUIDE IS PROPERLY SECURED, AND HAS BEEN FOR SEVERAL YEARS PRISONER X 747. I WILL ESCORT YOU TO HIS CELL UNDER COVER OF NIGHT, BUT NIGHTFALL WON'T BE FOR SOME HOURS.



GIVEN ERIS' LAST MESSAGE TO CALVIN AND THE OTHER MAIN PART OF MY VISION, CALVIN NEEDS TO MAKE HIS OWN DEAL WITH THE SNOW DEMONS FOR EVERYTHING TO WORK OUT



NO OFFENSE, SUPER HOBBS, BUT YOU CAN'T BE IN MULTIPLE PLACES AT ONCE, AND WE NEED MULTIPLE FIGHTERS TO WIN THIS WAR!

NO PROBLEM. I WE STILL GET TO HELP SAVE THE WORLD!



I'LL PASS ON WORD TO THE GREMLIN ENGINEERS TO MAKE THE LAST ZARNIUM COATED PART FOR THE SHIP, BUT TO NOT SWAP IT OUT UNTIL THE TRIP OFFWORLD IS DONE.



HE LEFT US IN THE DEBRIEFING ROOM, AND WAS BACK WITHIN MINUTES

PRISONER X 747 HAS BEEN INFORMED OF THIS, AND HE WISHES TO MEET THOSE HE WILL BE GUIDING. THAT WILL ALSO HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL NIGHTFALL.



WE WAITED FOR NIGHTFALL. IT HAD BEEN A WEIRD DAY AND WE WEREN'T ALL THAT HUNGRY DUE TO THE MEALS SARANNA AND I HAD EATEN AT MCZARGALD'S. BUT THE INFIRMARY INSISTED ON OUR EATING ON SCHEDULE AND DELIVERED OUR MEALS ANYWAY.

SO MINESTRONE SOUP FOR US BOTH? WAIT, I FEEL THAT PRESENCE AGAIN.



THE FLYING SPAGHETTI MONSTER TURNED MY MINESTRONE SOUP INTO RAVIOLI! AFTER SOME TALK WITH HEALER GHOLZOMBUS, BOTH IT AND SARANNA'S MINESTRONE SOUP WERE DONATED TO OTHER PATIENTS WHO ACTUALLY WERE SICK AND COULD STOMACH THEM.

SARANNA'S BEING ABLE TO SENSE THE UPCOMING CHANGE ON HER OWN CAME IN HANDY LATER. IN THE MEANTIME, ALL WE COULD DO WAS KEEP WAITING.

BOTH ZHUPARR AND HOBBS HADN'T EATEN IN A WHILE BEFORE I'D SUMMONED THEM. SO SUPER HOBBS GLEEFULLY ATE HIS SOUP.



THEN NIGHTFALL ARRIVED. IT'S TIME. FOLLOW ME. THE PASSAGEWAY WE NEED IS THIS WAY.



ZUNG LED US THROUGH A SERIES OF HIDDEN DOORWAYS, PROCEEDING DEEPER AND DEEPER, FINALLY HE STOPPED AT A CLEARLY MARKED DOOR.

THE BORDER OF THE DUNGEON IS ABOVE US. THE GREMLIN ENGINEERS BEYOND IT ARE PUTTING THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON THE SHIP.



ZUNG, YOU'RE EARLY! WE GOT THE ORDERS TO NOT MAKE THE SHIP FULL STEALTH, AND X-747 HAS VERIFIED THAT IT SHOULD FLY PROPERLY! WHY THE RUSH WHEN WE'VE WAITED SO LONG ALREADY?



ZORL, WE HAVE NEW REASON TO BELIEVE THAT TIMING IS CRITICAL, AND I AND MY CHARGES GOT HERE A LITTLE EARLY FOR THAT REASON. BY THE HUMAN DEFINITION OF NIGHTFALL, WE'RE RIGHT ON TIME.



THE HUMAN DEFINITION OF NIGHTFALL?

DUNGEON GOBLINS CAN SEE BETTER IN DARKNESS, SO THEY DON'T CONSIDER IT NIGHTFALL UNTIL IT'S DARK BY THEIR STANDARD!



BY TIGER AND DEMON STANDARDS, IT'S NOT REALLY NIGHTFALL YET EITHER.



THE SHIP HAS PASSED INSPECTIONS, PEER REVIEWS, AND DEFECT TRACKING.

SO IT'S FINALLY READY. X-747 SHOULD BE HAPPY.



DIDN'T KNOW SO MANY GOBLINS COULD FIT IN ONE PLACE!

AS GREMLINS, THEIR MAGICAL TETHERS ARE GENERALLY WEAK ENOUGH TO NOT BAR THEM FROM LEAVING THE DUNGEON!



AND WE'RE ALL UNDERGROUND BUT OUTSIDE OF IT IN IS THIS A BIG HANGAR?



AND WE MAY NOT ANSWER TO THE PRISONER, BUT I DISLIKE THE NECESSITY OF HAVING TO KEEP A PRISONER. IF CIRCUMSTANCES WERE NOT WHAT THEY WERE...



I CAN SEE WHY, ZULK. I DIDN'T KNOW YOU MADE THE ENGINEERING CORPS UNTIL NOW! CONGRATULATIONS!

THANK YOU ALL THAT WORK PAID OFF!



THERE IS THE SHIP. WE HAVE A ZARNIUM COATED SPATIA. FROBNICATOR FOR WHEN FULL STEALTH IS NEEDED. BUT IT'S NOT INSTALLED, PER OUR INSTRUCTIONS.



AND X-747 IS COMING. AFTER THIS, I FINALLY GET TO GO HOME, YES?



WHO ARE YOU, EXACTLY?

AM KRALTAR. I'VE BEEN HERE LONG ENOUGH FOR THESE GOBLINS TO LEARN MY SHIP AND REPAIR IT FOR A MISSION. HUH!



A MISSION THAT THEY HAVE BEEN VAGUE ABOUT ASIDE FROM SAYING FRIENDS OF A FRIEND WOULD BE INVOLVED!

CALVIN AND I DEALT WITH DINOSAURS SOMETIMES. BUT YOU'RE SOMETHING ELSE!

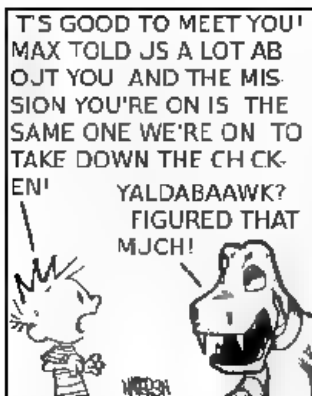


CALVIN, AS IN MAX'S NEPHEW? I AT LEAST KNOW THAT NAME! WHO ARE YOU OTHERS?

I'M SARANNA, AND THAT'S SUPER-HOBBS THE DEMON TIGER. WE'RE CALVIN'S FRIENDS.

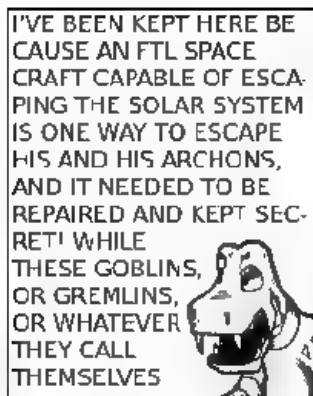


I WAS STILL PROCESSING IT ALL SO THIS WAS KRALTAR. THE ONE WHOSE POWER OF SUPER BLASPHEMY HAD MADE THE CHICKEN KILL SARANNA'S SISTER INSTEAD OF HER ("IF YOU GIVE A GOD A MIGRAINE HE MIGHT INFECT THE WRONG TWIN WITH ARIENFLORB SYNDROME") AND WHO'D SAVED MY UNCLE FROM BEING MADE A POOP GHOST ("GREATER LOVE HATH NO ONE THAN THIS THAT A MAN MERCY KILL EAT, AND POOP OUT HIS FRIEND BEFORE AN EVIL GOD CAN DO THOSE THINGS FIRST AND SILENCE HIS FRIEND'S GHOST") IT WAS A LOT.

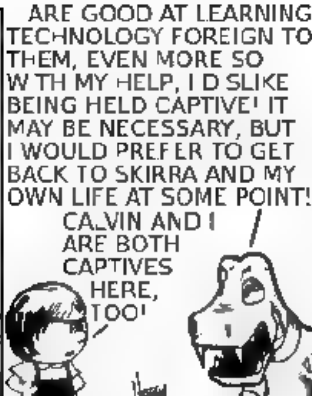


IT'S GOOD TO MEET YOU! MAX TOLD JS A LOT ABOUT YOU AND THE MISSION YOU'RE ON IS THE SAME ONE WE'RE ON TO TAKE DOWN THE CHICKEN!

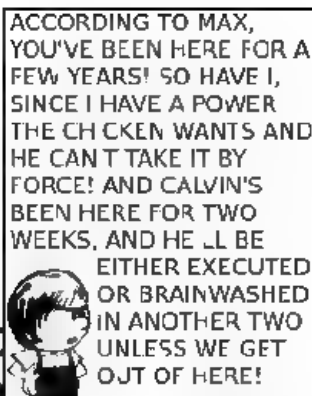
YALDABAABW? FIGURED THAT MUCH!



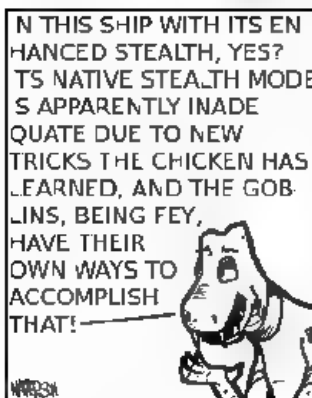
I'VE BEEN KEPT HERE BECAUSE AN FTL SPACE CRAFT CAPABLE OF ESCAPING THE SOLAR SYSTEM IS ONE WAY TO ESCAPE HIS AND HIS ARCHONS, AND IT NEEDED TO BE REPAIRED AND KEPT SECRET! WHILE THESE GOBLINS, OR GREMLINS, OR WHATEVER THEY CALL THEMSELVES



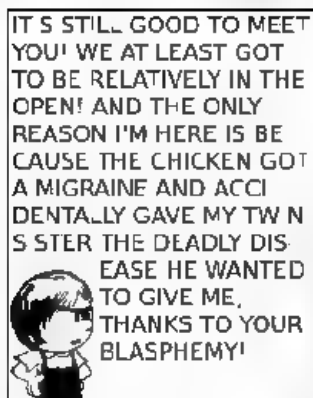
ARE GOOD AT LEARNING TECHNOLOGY FOREIGN TO THEM, EVEN MORE SO WITH MY HELP, I'D LIKE BEING HELD CAPTIVE! IT MAY BE NECESSARY, BUT I WOULD PREFER TO GET BACK TO SKIRRA AND MY OWN LIFE AT SOME POINT! CALVIN AND I ARE BOTH CAPTIVES HERE, TOO!



ACCORDING TO MAX, YOU'VE BEEN HERE FOR A FEW YEARS! SO HAVE I, SINCE I HAVE A POWER THE CHICKEN WANTS AND HE CAN'T TAKE IT BY FORCE! AND CALVIN'S BEEN HERE FOR TWO WEEKS, AND HE'LL BE EITHER EXECUTED OR BRAINWASHED IN ANOTHER TWO UNLESS WE GET OUT OF HERE!



IN THIS SHIP WITH ITS ENHANCED STEALTH, YES? IT'S NATIVE STEALTH MODE'S APPARENTLY INADEQUATE DUE TO NEW TRICKS THE CHICKEN HAS LEARNED, AND THE GOBLINS, BEING FEY, HAVE THEIR OWN WAYS TO ACCOMPLISH THAT!



IT'S STILL GOOD TO MEET YOU! WE AT LEAST GOT TO BE RELATIVELY IN THE OPEN! AND THE ONLY REASON I'M HERE IS BECAUSE THE CHICKEN GOT A MIGRAINE AND ACCIDENTALLY GAVE MY TWIN SISTER THE DEADLY DISEASE HE WANTED TO GIVE ME, THANKS TO YOUR BLASPHEMY!



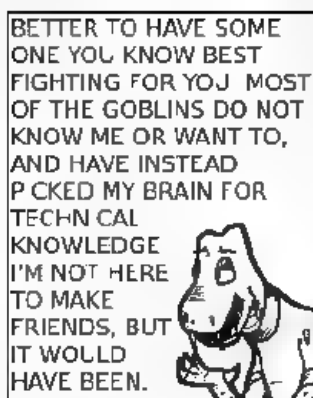
MY CONDOLENCES MY NOICED MIGRAINE SHOULD HAVE BEEN STRONG ENOUGH TO KNOCK HIM OUT, BUT DON'T WORRY! YOU DIDN'T KILL HER, THE CHICKEN DID!



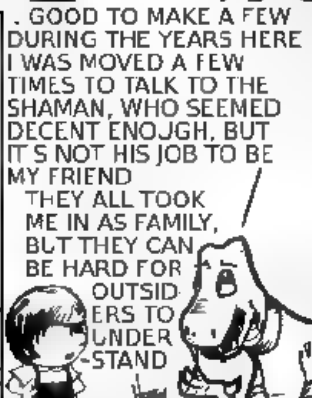
AND IF IT WEREN'T FOR SOME GOOD TIMING ON THE PART OF THE SNOW DEMONS, I'M SURE HE'D HAVE KILLED US BOTH EVENTUALLY DUE TO HIS BLOODTHIRST! THAT'S WHY WE'RE FINALLY TAKING HIM DOWN!



AND CALVIN, JUST SUMMONED ME BECAUSE HE WANTED HIS OLD FRIEND BACK, AND BECAUSE HE NEEDED SOMEONE WHO COULD FIGHT ON HIS SIDE! I CAN FIGHT AS WELL, BUT I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN



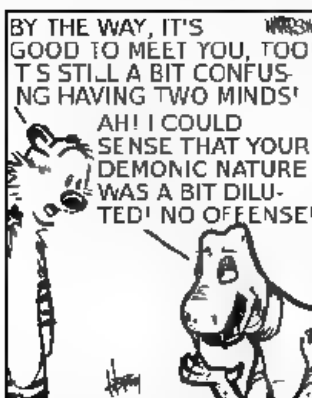
BETTER TO HAVE SOMEONE YOU KNOW BEST FIGHTING FOR YOU! MOST OF THE GOBLINS DO NOT KNOW ME OR WANT TO, AND HAVE INSTEAD PICKED MY BRAIN FOR TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE I'M NOT HERE TO MAKE FRIENDS, BUT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN.



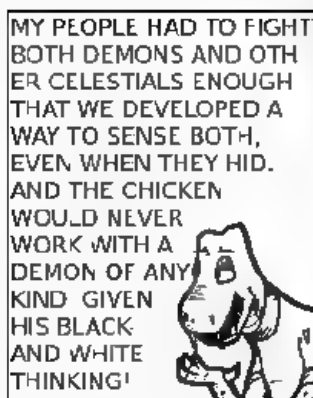
GOOD TO MAKE A FEW DURING THE YEARS HERE I WAS MOVED A FEW TIMES TO TALK TO THE SHAMAN, WHO SEEMED DECENT ENOUGH, BUT IT'S NOT HIS JOB TO BE MY FRIEND! THEY ALL TOOK ME IN AS FAMILY, BUT THEY CAN BE HARD FOR OUTSIDERS TO UNDERSTAND



OR VICE VERSA, IT SEEMS I AM TIRED OF THE ONES WHO CALLED EVERYTHING I SAID THAT DIDN'T ADVANCE REPAIRING OR ENHANCING MY SHIP "NON SENSE," JUST BECAUSE IT WAS OUTSIDE THEIR FOCUS! YES, SOME OF THEM SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN THAT!



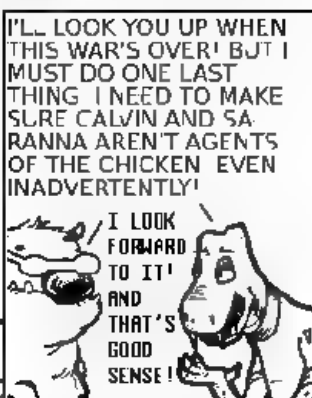
BY THE WAY, IT'S GOOD TO MEET YOU, TOO! IT'S STILL A BIT CONFUSING HAVING TWO MINDS! AH! I COULD SENSE THAT YOUR DEMONIC NATURE WAS A BIT DILUTED! NO OFFENSE!



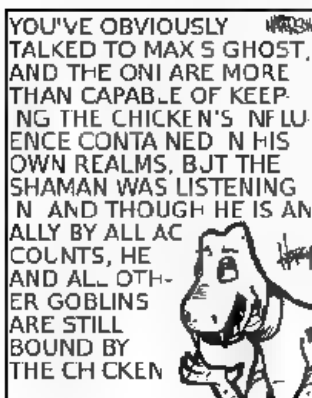
MY PEOPLE HAD TO FIGHT BOTH DEMONS AND OTHER CELESTIALS ENOUGH THAT WE DEVELOPED A WAY TO SENSE BOTH, EVEN WHEN THEY HID. AND THE CHICKEN WOULD NEVER WORK WITH A DEMON OF ANY KIND GIVEN HIS BLACK AND WHITE THINKING!



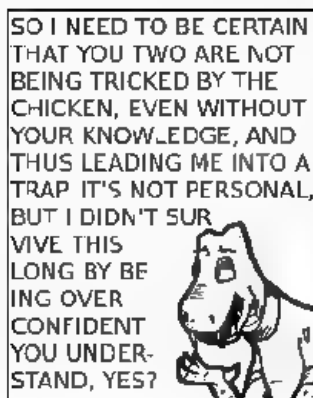
THE ENGINE IS FINALLY DONE INITIALIZING. IF YOU'RE DONE WITH INTRODUCTIONS, YOU SHOULD GO SOON. IT'S BEEN FASCINATING HAVING YOU HERE! THANK YOU, ZULK. YOU'VE BEEN GOOD TO ME, AT LEAST!



I'LL LOOK YOU UP WHEN THIS WAR'S OVER! BUT I MUST DO ONE LAST THING I NEED TO MAKE SURE CALVIN AND SARANNA AREN'T AGENTS OF THE CHICKEN EVEN INADVERTENTLY! I LOOK FORWARD TO IT! AND THAT'S GOOD SENSE!



YOU'VE OBVIOUSLY TALKED TO MAX'S GHOST, AND THE ONI ARE MORE THAN CAPABLE OF KEEPING THE CHICKEN'S INFLUENCE CONTAINED IN HIS OWN REALMS. BUT THE SHAMAN WAS LISTENING IN AND THOUGH HE IS AN ALLY BY ALL ACCOUNTS, HE AND ALL OTHER GOBLINS ARE STILL BOUND BY THE CHICKEN

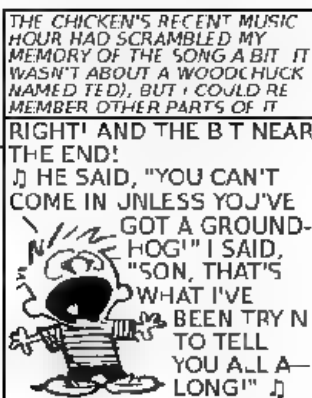


SO I NEED TO BE CERTAIN THAT YOU TWO ARE NOT BEING TRICKED BY THE CHICKEN, EVEN WITHOUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE, AND THUS LEADING ME INTO A TRAP IT'S NOT PERSONAL, BUT I DIDN'T SURVIVE THIS LONG BY BEING OVERCONFIDENT YOU UNDERSTAND, YES?



WAIT, THERE WAS THAT SONG HE SAID HE TOLD YOU ABOUT! HOW DID IT GO? HE HAD A GROUNDHOG, SAID HIS NAME WAS FRED TOLD ME IF I DIDN'T GIVE HIM MY SOUL, THE GROUNDHOG SOON WOULD BE DEAD!

AND SO WE BEGAN OUR SOMEWHAT MANGLED VERSION OF "THE BALLAD OF SATAN'S GROUNDHOG."



THE CHICKEN'S RECENT MUSIC HOUR HAD SCRAMBLED MY MEMORY OF THE SONG A BIT. IT WASN'T ABOUT A WOODCHUCK NAMED FRED, BUT I COULD REMEMBER OTHER PARTS OF IT RIGHT! AND THE BT NEAR THE END! HE SAID, "YOU CAN'T COME IN UNLESS YOU'VE GOT A GROUNDHOG!" I SAID, "SON, THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TELL YOU ALL ALONG!"

AND SUPER-HOBBS HARMONIZED ON THE BITS ABOUT SATAN THAT WE COULD REMEMBER

SATAN SATAN...



SOON, KRALTAR STOPPED JS

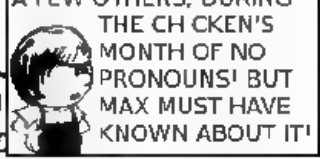
GOOD! THAT'S DEFINITELY MAX'S SONG! AND YOUR ABILITY TO SPEAK, OR EVEN THINK, SATAN'S NAME PROVES THAT THE CHICKEN DOESN'T BIND YOU!

HE'S AN UNPERSON NOW? SINCE WHEN?



SINCE SOMETIME AFTER I WAS BROUGHT HERE. I WAS TELLING ZULK WHAT I KNEW OF THE WORLD BEYOND THIS DUNGEON, OR EVEN THIS REALITY, AND I FOUND THAT HE WAS SUDDENLY UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND MY ACCOUNT OF CHRISTIANITY BEFORE THE CHICKEN CAME!

GOING FROM ENEMY TO UNPERSON IS A BIG CHANGE! HE MUST HAVE GOTTEN SUPREMELY CONFIDENT! THE LAST UNPERSON I REMEMBER HEARING ABOUT WERE "RUFUS XAVIER SARSAPARILLA" AND A FEW OTHERS, DURING THE CHICKEN'S MONTH OF NO PRONOUNNS! BUT MAX MUST HAVE KNOWN ABOUT IT!



AND NOW THAT YOU KNOW I'M NOT WORKING FOR THE CHICKEN, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT HE ACTUALLY HAS BEEN WORKING WITH DEMONS MOST OF THE REST OF MY KIND, BUT NOT BY THEIR CHOICE! AND SOME OF THEM WERE LISTENING, TOO!



I'M ONE OF THE FEW WHO ESCAPED HIM. IT'S

ONE OF THE REASONS I'M HELPING CALVIN! THE OTHER IS THAT THE OTHER HALF OF ME IS CALVIN'S BEST FRIEND!



I STAND CORRECTED. YAL DABAANK APPARENTLY NOW BELIEVES HE IS INVINCIBLE, OR CLOSE ENOUGH TO IT TO START BREAKING HIS MOST STRONGLY HELD PRINCIPLES WHEN HE THINKS DOING SO WILL GIVE HIM AN ADVANTAGE. IT IS A SIGN OF HIS DECLINE!

HE'S ALSO STARTED CUTTING HIS PRISONERS SENTENCES SHORT, WHICH IS WHY WE NEED TO ESCAPE HIM EVEN SOONER THAN WE THOUGHT! BEFORE HE DOES IT TO CALVIN!



THE GOBLINS HERE DO TALK ABOUT WHAT GOES ON AROUND HERE. THE PREVAILING THEORY IS THAT THE ORC CHIEF'S EARLY DEATH WILL CAUSE LESS PAIN IN THE LONG RUN.



I KNOW LITTLE ABOUT ORCS, BUT THEIR CHIEFS KEEP TRACK OF MATINGS AND MARRIAGES WITHIN THE CLAN. THERE ARE SEVERAL MALE ORCS WITH HUSBANDS AND

FEMALE ORCS WITH WIVES, AND A FEW WHO'VE USED MAGIC TO CHANGE GENDERS IN.



...THE KOTEK CLAN MEMBERS HERE, AND THE CHIEF KEEPS ALL THE RECORDS IN HIS HEAD. WITH HIS EXECUTION, THE CLAN ONLY HAS TO KEEP THOSE NON-CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS SECRET FOR A BIT LONGER. AND THEN THEY ONLY GET EXECUTED WITHOUT FACING WORSE BEFOREHAND!

SO HE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE CHICKEN'S BAD MOOD TO SACRIFICE HIMSELF TO MAKE SURE THEY GET THE EASIEST POSSIBLE DEATH! THAT FITS WITH WHAT I KNOW OF ORCS! JUST LIKE CHENDARR THE BARBARIAN!



IT'S FORTUNATE THAT ORCS ARE STILL FEY AND IMMUNE TO THE CHICKEN'S MIND-READING, AND THAT THIS PLACE IS OUTSIDE THE DUNGEON AND SO DOESN'T SET OFF THE



G* WORD ALARM BUT NOW THAT I KNOW I CAN TRUST YOU, WE MUST GO.

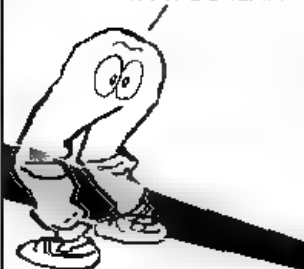
ALL FOUR OF US PACKED INTO THE SHIP WITH KRALTAR IN THE PILOT'S SEAT. HE WAS UNHAPPY AT NOT HAVING FULL ENHANCED STEALTH, BUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THE CHICKEN'S BEING REPLACED WITH AN EVEN WORSE ENTITY CONVINCED HIM IT WAS NECESSARY.

THE HANGAR OPENED AT THE TOP, REVEALING THE NIGHT SKY. WE WERE SO CLOSE TO REALLY GETTING OUT OF THE DUNGEON.

BUT JUST AS KRALTAR HADN'T ANTICIPATED EVERYTHING IN TERMS OF SECURITY, NO ONE ANTICIPATED THAT ONE OF THE BUTT SERVANTS WAS RIGHT OUTSIDE THE HANGAR.

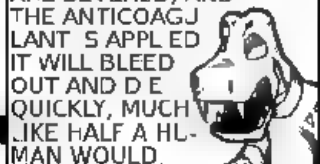
KRALTAR WAS READY, THOUGH, AND FIDDLING WITH A RED HEXAGONAL PANEL.

FART SCREAM



THE BEAM MOVED UPWARD, PULSATED, AND SHEARED THE BUTT SERVANT'S LEGS OFF AT THE THIGHS. BLOOD POURED OUT OF THE OPEN WOUNDS AS THEIR VOICE FADED AND THEY COLLAPSED. AFTER A FEW SECONDS, KRALTAR DIMMED THE VIEWSCREEN SO WE DIDN'T HAVE TO WITNESS EVERYTHING.

THE FEMORAL ARTERIES ARE SEVERED, AND THE ANTICOAGULANT'S APPLIED. IT WILL BLEED OUT AND DIE QUICKLY, MUCH LIKE HALF A HUMAN WOULD.



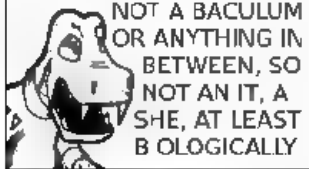
KRALTAR THEN SWITCHED TO FIDDLING WITH A PURPLE HEXAGONAL PANEL. WE STILL COULDN'T SEE ANYTHING, BUT THE BEAM FIRING SOUND CHANGED TO A LOWER FREQUENCY.

THERE ARE NO MORE LIFE SIGNS FROM IT. I AM TRACTORING ITS REMAINS INTO THE EMERGENCY COMPARTMENT TO AVOID LEAVING ANY TRACE.



NOW SCANNING THE REMAINS. STANDARD BONE STRUCTURE, SO NOT ONE OF THE ENHANCED BUTT SOLDIERS. AND, FOR THE RECORD, ON THE BACK OF THE REVERSE PELVIS: SKULL, A BAJBELLUM,

NOT A BACULUM OR ANYTHING IN BETWEEN, SO NOT AN IT, A SHE, AT LEAST BIOLOGICALLY.



THINK I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO UNDERSTOOD ALL THAT, SINCE KILLING IS SO GROUNDED IN THE LIBERAL ARTS FOR BOTH TIGERS AND DEMONS! WE ONLY HAD TO FIGHT A FEW, BUT THEY WERE ENOUGH.



I ALSO FIND IT MUCH EASIER TO REMEMBER SOME PROCEDURES IF I SAY THEM OUT LOUD WHILE DOING THEM. AND WE CANNOT AFFORD TO FAIL THIS MISSION. IN SHORT, THE THREAT IS GONE.



GOOD! BUT WHAT DO WE DO WITH HER REMAINS NOW?

WOULD USUALLY REMOVE A FRAGMENT FOR WHATEVER DEATH CUSTOMS ITS OWNER WOULD REQUIRE, AND PUT THE REST INTO THE SHIP BIOCONVERTER TO MAKE MORE EKAFLEL BUT FROM WHAT I HEAR, YOU ARE MAKING USE OF ELDRITCH POWER.



AND SUCH REMAINS CAN BE USEFUL FOR SUCH, YES? ALTHOUGH I'M NOT THAT FAMILIAR WITH THEM. I AM ZHUPARR ISI! AND FOES REMAINS DEFINITELY ARE!



I'LL KEEP THEM WHERE THEY ARE FOR NOW THEN. ELDRITCH POWER CAPABLE OF TAKING DOWN YALDABAABK OBVIOUSLY TAKES PRIORITY. THANKS. I STILL HAVE A LOT TO LEARN, THOUGH! SO DO WE ALL!



HOW CAN YOU THREE BE SO CALM WHEN WE JUST AVOIDED GETTING CAUGHT BY SUCH A TINY MARGIN? MY VISION IS STILL UNCLEAR ON EXACTLY WHO FOLLOWS US AND SOLIDIFIES THE RIGHT FUTURE!



I'VE HAD TRAINING TO DEAL WITH IT, JUST AS SUPER HOBBS. OR HIS ZHUPARR HALF, APPARENTLY HAS YOU AND CALVIN NEED TIME TO PROCESS IT, ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHER THINGS YOU'VE EXPERIENCED, EVEN IF CALVIN SEEMS TO HANDLE IT FOR NOW.



GIVE ME A MOMENT TO GET US FAR ENOUGH AWAY FROM THE HANGAR. AS FOR WHERE WE GO AFTER THAT, ALL I HAVE HEARD FROM BOTH THE GOBLINS AND YOU SUGGEST THAT WE NEED TO FIND A PLACE OF SPIRITUAL AND MAGICAL LEARNING TO SUCCEED.



ONE OUTSIDE THIS SOLAR SYSTEM, TO PUT IT OUT OF THE REACH OF YALDABAABK OR ANY OF HIS ARCHONS, BUT WITHIN THIS REALITY, SINCE OTHER REALITIES' WAYS MAY NOT MATCH THIS ONE CLOSELY AND SO WILL NOT HELP YOU IN THIS PARTICULAR QUEST.



SARANNA COMPOSED HERSELF AND SPOKE UP AGAIN. CALVIN'S PLAN IS TO MAKE A DEAL WITH THE SNOW DEMONS, MUCH LIKE HOW I DID! BUT HE'S AIMING FOR OFFENSIVE POWER TO TAKE DOWN THE CHICKEN GOD, INSTEAD OF VISION LIKE MINE!



THAT NARROWS IT DOWN NICELY TO ONE WORLD IN PARTICULAR. ZARTOK 3 THE COORDINATES FOR IT ARE IN THE SHIP MEMORY BANKS ALREADY, AND WE SHOULD GET GOING THAT WAY BEFORE ANY OTHER AGENTS OF THE CHICKEN SHOW UP HERE.



IT WILL TAKE NEARLY SIX DAYS TO LEAVE THE SOLAR SYSTEM AT LIGHT SPEED, PLUS SLIGHTLY OVER ONE DAY TO REACH ZARTOK 3, SO ROUGHLY A WEEK IN TOTAL. THE FTL DRIVE, AT FULL CAPACITY, CAN CUT THAT DOWN TO ROUGHLY FIFTEEN HOURS.



SUDDENLY, I WAS FREAKED OUT! RUNNING AT MAXIMUM CAPACITY? DOES THAT HAVE A HIGH RISK OF BREAKING DOWN? WHAT WILL WE DO FOR A WEEK IF THAT HAPPENS? AND WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE FOLLOWED ANYWAY!



THE FTL DRIVE HAS BEEN STRESS TESTED AND QUADRUPLE CHECKED, AND EVEN WITH THE GOBLINS' MODIFICATIONS, THAT SHOULD NOT HAPPEN. IT'S THE ONE THING I CAN BE REASONABLY SURE OF.



KRALTAR WORKED THE CONTROLS SOME MORE AND THEN ENGAGED THE FTL DRIVE. THE SHIP FINALLY STARTED ITS LONG JOURNEY OUT OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

BWEGZORRRM!



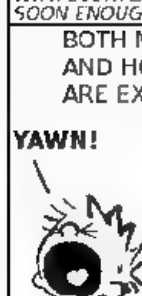
NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE!



NEITHER HAVE I!

WOW! HYPERSPACE WAS INDESCRIBABLY BEAUTIFUL. SOMEHOW.

ALTHOUGH THE FACT THAT IT WAS EVENING CAUGHT UP WITH EVERYONE BUT KRALTAR SOON ENOUGH.



BOTH MY ZHUPARR AND HOBBS HALVES ARE EXHAUSTED.

YAWN!

SARANNA WAS THE LAST TO FALL ASLEEP.

I CAN'T STAY AWAKE MUCH LONGER, BUT HOW CAN THE CHICKEN GOD TRACK US?

THE EFFECTS OF THIS KIND OF FTL DRIVE, PLUS THE THREADS OF PROPHECY.



SUCH THREADS FOLLOW ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN PROPHECIES, BUT THE AMOUNT OF POWER REQUIRED TO FULLY PERCEIVE THEM IS STAGGERING, SO I BELIEVE IT TO BE AN ACCEPTABLE RISK.



IF YOU SAY SO GOOD NIGHT!



I EXPECTED TO HAVE ANOTHER NIGHTMARE, BUT IF I DID, I DON'T REMEMBER IT. I ONLY HOPED THE CHICKEN WOULDN'T CARE ABOUT OUR ESCAPE UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE TO EFFECTIVELY STOP US.

AND BY NOT CARING, I MEANT EITHER THE STANDARD VISION OR THE VERSION DAD, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT MOM USED (NAMELY, ON THE BRIEFEST MENTION OF SOME THING RANTING ABOUT IT FOR ABOUT FIVE MINUTES AND THEN ASSERTING THEY DIDN'T CARE ABOUT IT). BECAUSE EITHER WAY WOULD SLOW HIM DOWN AND THE LATTER VISION LIKELY CAME STRAIGHT FROM HIM ANYWAY.

WE ALL WOKE UP ABOUT TWELVE HOURS LATER. SARANNA TOLD US WHAT KRALTAR HAD SAID ABOUT THE THREADS OF PROPHECY AND I WONDERED OUT LOUD HOW FAR THE CHICKEN WOULD GO. WE'D ALL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH.



GOOD TO KNOW BUT I'M GOING BACK TO SLEEP! I'LL REALLY NEED MY STRENGTH TO PRACTICE ALL MY ELDRITCH POWERS SOON.

THE REST OF THE TRIP WAS UNEVENTFUL. TOWARD THE VERY END OF IT, SARANNA TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK ONE QUESTION.

KRALTAR? MAX TOLD US ABOUT SOME OF THE CONVERSATIONS YOU HAD. SO WOULD YOU KNOW WHAT THE "H" IN "JESUS H CHRIST" REALLY STANDS FOR?



YES, ACTUALLY! IT'S COMPLEX. IT WAS.

AND THEN YAHWEH YELLED AT JESUS FOR BECOMING INVOLVED WITH A NEWLY ASCENDED GOD WHO COULD TAKE THE FORM OF AN ATTACK HELICOPTER, AS WELL AS FOR MAKING THAT GOD'S FULL NAME PART OF HIS OWN. HE SEALED UP THE TIME BARRIER TO BAR JESUS' RETURN TO THE FUTURE, AND DECREED.



THAT NO ONE SHOULD CALL HIM "JESUS HORATIO HELICOPTER CHRIST" EVER AGAIN, ONLY "JESUS CHRIST." AND THAT THE "H" STOOD FOR ONLY "H" WHEN THE CHILDREN'S SONG ABOUT IT STARTED IN THE FUTURE, HE INTENDED TO CHANGE IT TO "OHN, JACOB JINGLEHEIMER SCHMIDT" TO KEEP UP APPEARANCES.



SO THAT'S WHY GODS ARE USUALLY BARRED FROM TIME TRAVEL. WHAT THE "H" IN JESUS CHRIST ACTUALLY STANDS FOR VERSUS WHAT IT'S CLAIMED TO STAND FOR, WHAT CHRISTIANITY'S SECRET COMMANDMENTS 0 AND -1 ARE, AND EXACTLY HOW I DISCOVERED IT ALL WHILE HELPING AN EXILED GOD ESCAPE YOUR WORLD. IT IS INTERESTING, YES?



WHEW! BUT WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO ATTEND THERAPY SESSIONS IN THE FUTURE? AND WHY AREN'T OTHER GODS ABLE TO OPEN THE TIME BARRIER AFTER YAHWEH SEALED IT?

AND WHY SUCH D'S LIKE FOR HELICOPTERS?



AND HELICOPTERS WERE INVENTED AFTER THE "JOHN JACOB JINGLEHEIMER SMITH" SONG STARTED UP! DID THE TIMELINE GET BROKEN DUE TO YAHWEH'S MEDDLING THE SAME WAY IT DID FROM THE CHICKEN GOD'S MEDDLING LATER?



YES. IT WAS A COMBINATION OF THE TIMELINE'S BEING BROKEN AND HORATIO HELICOPTER'S BEING A TIME TRAVELER HIMSELF. AND AFTER YAHWEH SEALED THE TIME BARRIER, IT WAS REINFORCED BY ONI AGENTS' TIMELINES CAN NOW BE CHANGED ONLY INDIRECTLY, BY DAMAGING OTHER PARTS OF A GIVEN REALITY.



YAHWEH HARDENED JESUS' HEART AGAINST THE EXILED GOD, AS I SAID AS FOR WHY HE HOLDS A GRUDGE AGAINST ATT.

THAT SOUND MEANS WE HAVE ARRIVED AT THE SANCTUARY IF YOU TWO WOULD WAKE UP SUPER HOBBS?



CAN DO! SORRY WE HAVE TO CUT THIS SHORT!

WE CAN FILL HIM IN ON THIS STORY LATER!



I KNEW SUPER HOBBS'S BEST SO I WOKE HIM UP. SARANNA MUSED A BIT MORE WHILE I DID IT.

HOW OFFENDED MUST YAHWEH HAVE BEEN THAT JESUS WAS USING HIS TITLE AS A SURNAME DURING THAT TIME? AND HOW ELSE WOULD YOU OFFEND HIM THAT MUCH?



ELSEWHERE AS IF TO ANSWER HER QUESTION

SO THOUGHTLESS! MY EX-LOVE GOES OFF ABOUT HIS STOCK OF NUCLEAR MISSILES PLUNGING INTO INFIDELS, BUT NEVER THINKS OF MY THREE HEAT-SEEKING MOISTURE MISSILES PLUNGING INTO HIM ANY MORE!



AND HE NAMED HIS HEAVEN COCKAYNE, AFTER BOTH OF US, SO HE SAID! BUT HIS NAME CAME FIRST AS ALWAYS! WHY NOT PUT ME FIRST AND NAME IT AYNE COCK? AT LEAST I TRACKED DOWN A FEW OF MY ANGEL DESERTERS AND REABSORBED ALL THEIR POWER? FOR ME TO WIN, THEY MUST LOSE!

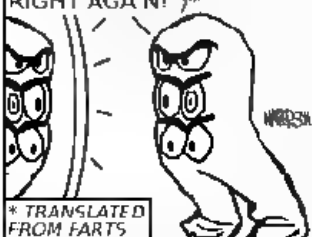


("UHHH. STILL SO WEAK I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY COMPLAINED BEFORE I FOLLOWED THEM OUT! THEY HAD NO RIGHT TO! THEY'RE MY SERVANTS! I'M THE IMPORTANT ONE! I'M THE R KING.")



* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

("AND WE, I, THE ONE AND ONLY TRIPLE BUTT, WILL BE KING OF KINGS AGAIN SOON! YES, MIRROR, THINGS WILL BE SET RIGHT AGAIN!")



* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

BWARRK! BWARRK! ("WHAT? NOT THAT ALARM! SOMEONE ON EARTH USED UNSHIELDED CEL-DINO TECHNOLOGY WITHIN THE LAST TWELVE HOURS! CAN TURN THIS TO MY ADVANTAGE!")



* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

("MY EX-LOVE IS TOO BOUND TO THIS WORLD TO GO AFTER SUCH THINGS HIMSELF. I'M NOT, BUT IT WOULD BE TOO SUSPICIOUS IF I DID SO! ESPECIALLY IF IT TURNS OUT TO BE RELATED TO A PROPHECY, WHICH I'LL HAVE TO CHECK!")



* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

SOON
RING RING

♪ THE HOLY, HOLY, HOLY ONE IS CALLING. ♪



AH, MY TRUE LORD'S RING TONE!



SOON AFTER THAT ("YALDABAAWK, MY LORD! YALDY WALDY, MY BELOVED LORDY WORDY! DID YOU HEAR THE CEL-DINO TECH ALARM GO OFF? IT'S ALSO TIED TO A PROPHECY THAT COULD BRING YOUR DOWNFALL! TOOK INITIATIVE AND CALLED ARPHAXAD!")



* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

CEL-DINO TECH? AFTER ALL THESE YEARS? AND THERE'S A PROPHECY INVOLVED, TOO? TELL ME OF IT, MY LOVE, AND THEN SEND ARPHAXAD IN!



AFTER THE EXPLANATION... I WAS SUPPOSED TO TAKE STOCK IN THE OLD PROPHECY'S ALMANAC? I THOUGHT IT WAS ALL HOGWASH BY NOW! AND IF THAT NANO-BRAINED GUN GNOME HAD BEEN ABLE TO AIM, IT WOULD ALL BE MOOT! STILL, YOU'VE DONE WELL. TAKE THE DAY OFF, OR HAVE THE NEW BUTT-RECRUITS SLAUGHTER SOMETHING. I DON'T CARE! WHERE IS ARPHAXAD NOW?



("AS YOU WISH, LORD ARPHAXAD IS OUTSIDE THE DOOR. I GUESS I'LL GO SATISFY MYSELF WITH THAT CYLINDRICAL ASTEROID I FOUND ON MY LAST OUTING INTO SPACE.")



GOOD! PROPHECY BREAKING AWAITS!

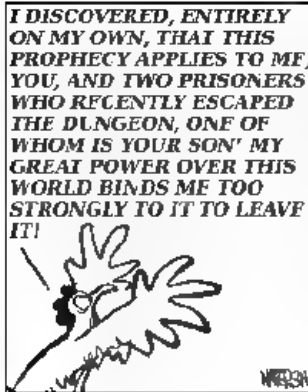
* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

SOON AFTER THAT

MY LORD, WHAT EXACTLY IS THIS? IT LOOKS LIKE A PROPHECY FROM THE OLD PROPHECY'S ALMANAC!



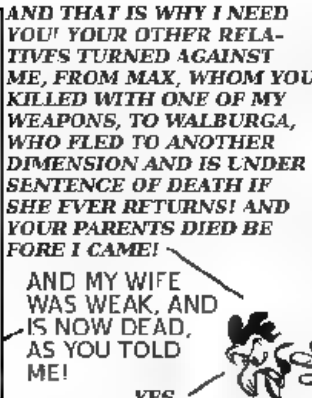
I DISCOVERED, ENTIRELY ON MY OWN, THAT THIS PROPHECY APPLIES TO ME, YOU, AND TWO PRISONERS WHO RECENTLY ESCAPED THE DUNGEON, ONE OF WHOM IS YOUR SON! MY GREAT POWER OVER THIS WORLD BINDS ME TOO STRONGLY TO IT TO LEAVE IT!



AND THAT IS WHY I NEED YOU! YOUR OTHER RELATIVES TURNED AGAINST ME, FROM MAX, WHOM YOU KILLED WITH ONE OF MY WEAPONS, TO WALBURGA, WHO FLED TO ANOTHER DIMENSION AND IS UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH IF SHE EVER RETURNS! AND YOUR PARENTS DIED BEFORE I CAME!

AND MY WIFE WAS WEAK, AND IS NOW DEAD, AS YOU TOLD ME!

YES.

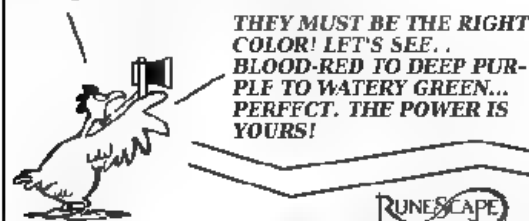


YOUR SON HAS EITHER TURNED AGAINST ME AS WELL, OR IS ON THE VERGE OF DOING SO! IT SEEMS HE HAS MADE FRIENDS WITH CEL-DINO SCUM THE WAY MAX DID, OR AT LEAST USES THEIR TECHNOLOGY! I MUST GET A HOLD OF HIM AGAIN, ALONG WITH HIS ALLY, THE GIRL WITH THE SIGHT I DON'T HAVE YET, BUT WILL SOON!



AND NOW TO SETTLE WHAT REMAINS OF YOUR BLOODLINE! YOU, AT LEAST, ARE NO TRAITOR TO ME, BUT YOU NEED MORE POWER TO DO WHAT I NEED! I WILL PULL FROM THE ENERGIES OF DIMENSIONS I'VE CONQUERED! THEY JUST NEED TUNING!

THEY MUST BE THE RIGHT COLOR! LET'S SEE... BLOOD-RED TO DEEP PURPLE TO WATERY GREEN... PERFECT. THE POWER IS YOURS!



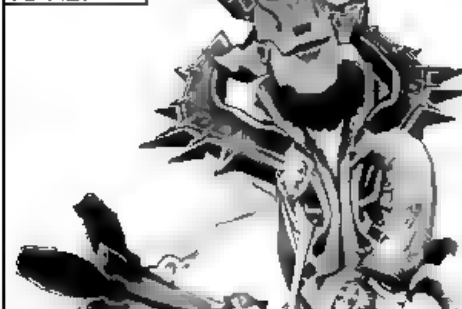
I HAVE ALL THESE GREAT GENES, BUT THEY'RE RECESSIVE THAT'S THE PROBLEM HERE



HUH? I HAVE BLADES LIKE YOURS NOW, MY LORD!



MY LORD, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME?



I HAVE GIVEN YOU GREAT POWER! YOU ARE ONE OF THE GREATEST OF MY SERVANTS! YOU NO LONGER NEED GLASSES, OR EYES AT ALL, WITH YOUR ENHANCED SENSES! FOLLOW THE THREADED TRAIL OF PROPHECY THROUGH SPACE TO FIND YOUR WAYWARD SON AND THE ONE-EYED GIRL, AND DESTROY THEM! YOU DON'T EVEN NEED A SPACE-CRAFT! YOU CAN GO IN THE FLESH, AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT!



I FEEL THE POWER NOW! IT'S INCREDIBLE! THEY ARE DEAD ALREADY, MY LORD!



YOU CAN NOW SPEAK IN MINDS THE WAY I CAN! BUT THE ONE-EYED GIRL'S MIND IS SHIELDED, AND I NOW SUSPECT YOUR SON'S IS SINCE THEY BOTH WERE SO EAGER TO ESCAPE! BUT NO MATTER! SPEAK TO THEM IN PERSON, AND MAKE THEM TASTE OF FEAR BEFORE YOU KILL THEM!




I WILL NOT REMAIN SILENT! I AM DOING THE LORD'S WORK

WHERE ARE THE THREADS OF PROPHECY? CAN I FEEL THEM NOW! THE HERETICS HAVE GONE TO GROUND ON A SANCTUARY WORLD, AND I KNOW WHERE IT IS! I WILL GO TO THEM AND MAKE THEM RUE THE DAY THEY DISOBEYED!



GOOD! SUCCEED IN BREAKING THE PROPHECY AND I WILL GRANT YOU ETERNAL LIFE AT MY SIDE!

THAT IS ALL I HAVE EVER WANTED FROM YOU




CLICK! WHIRR!

I HAVE OPENED THE ROOF! LEAP, AND YOU CAN REACH SPACE DIRECTLY FROM HERE!

AM OFF ON MY HOLY MISSION, MY LORD!



I'VE PLACED SPATIAL AND TELEPATHIC IETHERS ON YOU! REPORT WHEN YOU ARRIVE WHERE THEY ARE, AND LET ME KNOW WHEN YOUR MISSION IS COMPLETE! I WILL PULL YOU BACK HERE FOR YOUR REWARD!



I WILL DO SO, MY LORD!

RUNESCAPE



THAT TOOK MUCH MORE POWER OUT OF ME THAN I EXPECTED, ESPECIALLY TUNING ALL THOSE ENERGIES! BUT IF THERE'D BEEN ONLY THE FIRST CHANGE OF COLOR, NOT THE SECOND, THE TRANSFORMATION WOULDN'T HAVE WORKED! AND HE MUST BE STRONG ENOUGH TO ACT AS MY AGENT IN PLACES I CANNOT GO!



IT WILL ALL BE OVER SOON! ALL TRAITORS SHALL DIE, BY EITHER MY HAND OR HIS! HA HA HA!

IN THE CHICKEN'S HELL, N'FEATHERWORLD

THERE'S BEEN A BROWN-OUT. SEVERAL OF THE CELLS HAVE DEVELOPED BREACHES.

THE BREACHES HAVE OPENED UP A PATH TO THE OUTER WALL AND A SECTION OF THE GATES.

HOW DID ANYONE TAME AND RIDE SOME OF THE GHOST-ZOMBIES? SECUR...
NO CARRIER

CELLS 7879, 7573, 7871, AND 8333 ARE NO LONGER SEAL...
NO CARRIER

YOU ARE HERE

BREACH

A CHICKEN NON-WORSHIPPER, A MASS MURDERER OF CHICKEN WORSHIPPERS, AND AN EATER OF HONEY MUSTARD ON HOT DOGS HAVE POTENTIALLY ESCAPED.

WHY ARE THOSE CRIMINALS TOGETHER?

ALL COMMANDMENTS ARE EQUAL! KEEP QUESTIONING, WARDEN, AND I'LL DOWNGRADE YOU TO PRISONER AND PUT YOU IN AN INTACT CELL!

BACK ON EARTH...

LORD AND MASTER, THERE'S BEEN A JAILBREAK IN YOUR HELL. TWO OUTSIDERS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF A POWER FAILURE AND RELEASED UP TO THREE PRISONERS, ACCORDING TO THE WARDENS' REPORTS!



BILLIONS AND BILLIONS OF CELLS, AND YOU EXPECT ME TO CARE ABOUT ONLY THREE? THE POWER FAILURE WAS NECESSARY FOR MY SURVIVAL! DON'T BOTHER ME WITH SUCH TRIVIALITIES!



LORD AND MASTER, THERE HASN'T BEEN A JAILBREAK THERE SINCE IT WAS UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND YOU WERE SENDING OFFENDERS THERE ANYWAY! IT IS CONCERNING!



CONCERN NOTED AND IGNORED! IF THE WARDENS ARE CONCERNED, TELL THEM THE SAME!

YES, LORD

AND MASTER



SEVERAL DAYS LATER, IN THE GHOST REALM...

I GOT A LETTER IN THE MAIL! NO ADDRESS, BUT THE NAME'S THAT CLIENT I HAD THAT I TOLD CALVIN AND SARANNA ABOUT! HE SAID HE BROKE HIS MATE OUT OF HELL ALONG WITH SOMEONE WHO PUT HONEY MUSTARD ON HOT DOGS, BUT HAD TO LEAVE A PSYCHOPATHIC MASS MURDERER BEHIND!



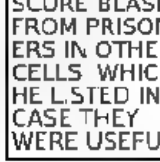
GOOD! SOMETHING WORKED OUT!



SO SOMETIMES PEOPLE WHO ARE ACTUALLY BAD END UP IN THAT HELL! I SUSPECTED AS MUCH, SINCE AN EXTREME FEW OF HIS COMMANDMENTS FORBID ACTUALLY BAD THINGS!



HE ALSO SAID THAT, DUE TO THE TIMELINE REPAIRS THAT MADE EVERYONE STOP AGING, BUT NOT DYING, FOR ABOUT TEN YEARS MEANT THAT HELL WAS A LOT BIGGER THAN HE EXPECTED, AND HIS MATE HAD PICKED UP SOME OBSCURE BLASPHEMIES FROM PRISONERS IN OTHER CELLS WHICH HE LISTED IN CASE THEY WERE USEFUL!



SOME OF THEM WERE THINGS I'D NEVER HEARD, EVEN FROM KRALTAR! I SENT THE LIST TO TIFFANY SO SHE COULD MAKE SURE THEY'D BE USED AGAINST THE CHICKEN!

NOW THAT YOU MENTION KRALTAR, I JUST GOT A TRANSMISSION FROM CALVIN MENTIONING HIM AS WELL!



LIGHT SPEED TRAVEL IS MONOTONOUS, BUT I'M FINALLY OUT OF THE TRINITY'S RANGE, AND THEIR MIND SHIELD STILL HOLDS, SO MY THOUGHTS CAN BE MY OWN! MY LONG PLAN IS COMING TO FRUITION! THE RECORDS THAT I WAS BORN EIGHT MONTHS AFTER MY PARENTS WERE MARRIED ARE SEALED, MY PARENTS ARE DEAD FOR ABANDONING ME WITH A FAMILY FRIEND UNTIL THEY HAD MORE CHILDREN AND GENEROUSLY TOOK ME BACK, I WORKED TO LOSE THE SMALL-TOWN ACCENT AND GET AN EDUCATION ALONG WITH MY SO-CALLED SIBLINGS, WHICH MAKES ME RESPECTABLE; I SERVE THE MOST POWERFUL GOD UNTIL TAKE ALL HIS ENEMIES DOWN, I GAIN ENOUGH POWER TO REPLACE HIM!

IN SPACE...



RUNESCAPE

I KEEP THIS FORM THE TRINITY WILL DIE BY MY HAND TOO! NO ONE WILL EVER SNEER AT ME FOR BEING WHITE TRASH EVER AGAIN! NO ONE WILL EVER HURT ME AGAIN! NO ONE WILL BE CAPABLE OF HURTING ME EVER AGAIN! I'LL PUNISH EVERYONE UNTIL THEY LOVE ME UNCONDITIONALLY! NOT LIKE THE CHICKEN OR THE TRINITY, WHO ONLY GET IT AS LIP SERVICE! ONLY! I AM! HOLY!



AND INHERITING ALL THAT MONEY FROM MY RICH MOTHER-IN-LAW ONLY MAKES ME MORE HOLY! I DON'T KNOW WHY SHE LASHED OUT AT ME AFTER I LEFT HER ALONE FOR MONTHS AFTER SHE WAS WIDOWED, BUT SAYING SHE MIGHT DISINHERIT ME? **NO! ONE! DISRESPECTS! ME! LIKE! THAT!** OF COURSE I THREW THAT HOURLONG FIT ABOUT HOW MUCH I DESPISED HER BEHIND HER BACK AND IN FRONT OF CALVIN, AND THEN REFUSED TO TAKE HIM TO VISIT HER EVER AGAIN, BUT NO ONE WOULD BELIEVE HIM OVER ME, AND I'D RUN HIS LIFE IF HE TOLD! THANK GOD I BARELY HAD TO KEEP UP THE FAKE NICE ACT BEFORE SHE GOT ALZHEIMER'S! ALL RHON HAD TO DO WAS BECOME EXECUTOR OF HER WILL BY FORGING HER SIGNATURE!



AND WITH BOTH RHON AND HER MOTHER DEAD NOW, IT'S ALL MINE, AND NO ONE CAN BLAME ANYTHING ON ME BECAUSE ALL CREDIBLE WITNESSES ARE GONE! WHICH REMINDS ME, I DO WISH THE TRINITY HADN'T MADE SATAN A LOST SOUL! HE WOULD HAVE MADE A USEFUL SCAPEGOAT ONCE



WON! I'LL JUST HAVE TO BLAME THINGS ON HIS UNSPECIFIED RELATIVES, "THE DEEP DEVILS!"

SANCTUARY PLANET ZARTOK 3



IT WAS GOOD TO BE OUTSIDE THE DUNGEON KRALTAR HAD APPARENTLY BEEN HERE BEFORE, AND KNEW HOW TO FILL OUT ALL THE PROPER PAPERWORK TO GET US SPIRITUAL ASYLUM

SARANNA GAVE ME SOME POINTERS ON HOW TO DEAL WITH THE SNOW DEMONS, BUT SAID I'D HAVE TO MAKE THE ACTUAL DEAL MYSELF

WE HAD ENOUGH PRIVACY IN OUR LIVING QUARTERS THAT IT WOULD WORK, MUCH LIKE IN THE GHOST LIBRARY I WAS NERVOUS ABOUT BOTH THE DEAL AND WHO'D BE FOLLOWING US, BUT KRALTAR SAID THE THREADS OF PROPHECY WERE MUCH HARDER TO FOLLOW ON A PLANET AS OPPOSED TO IN SPACE, WHICH MEANT IT WOULD BE EASIER TO HIDE HIS SPACE CRAFT HERE

I SWAPPED OUT THE LAST NON-ZARNIUM COATED PART, AND THE ENHANCED STEALTH IS WORKING! BETTER THAN THE OLD DAYS OF SCATTERING SHIP PIECES ACROSS MULTIPLE PLANETS



I'D CONTACTED BRIAN TELEPATHICALLY TO KEEP HIM INFORMED OF ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I'D DONE IT, BUT THANKFULLY IT WORKED FLAWLESSLY. I WONDERED HOW FRUSTRATED THE CHICKEN WAS AT NOT BEING ABLE TO STOP US AND HAVING TO WAIT ON AN AGENT INSTEAD, BUT GIVEN WHAT I'D SEEN OF HIM I COULD GUESS THAT

THE ENHANCED HEARING MUTATION REDUCED YOU TO ONE EYE? AND NOW YOU WANT A PITY PARTY? I'LL POKE THAT EYE OUT AND GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO COMPLAIN ABOUT! GRRR!



THE DEAL I MADE WITH THE SNOW DEMONS WAS TEMPORARY. THEY'D HELP ME BRING SNOWMEN TO LIFE TO TAKE DOWN THEIR OLD ENEMY THE LUMBERCHICKEN. IN RETURN, I'D MAKE THE SNOWMEN STRONGER THAN ANY ORDINARY SNOWMEN BY FUSING THEM WITH OTHER ELDRITCH ENTITIES. (ZHUPARR KNEW SOME WHO'D BE WILLING TO COOPERATE, AND NO PERMANENT DEAL MEANT NO PERMANENT SACRIFICE.)



I CALL UPON THE MIGHTY SNOW DEMONS FOR AID!



SNOOGY WOOGY OOGY BOOGY DISTO MISTO WIPS!

AAGGHH!

POOF!

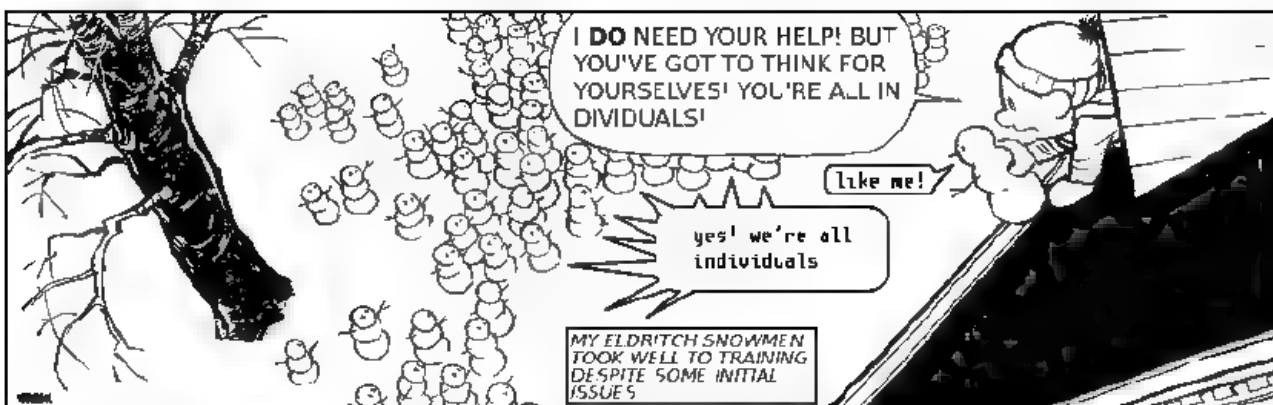
UNLIKE WITH SARANNA, THEY SENT AN ACTUAL AGENT OF THEIRS TO DEAL WITH ME SINCE WE WERE OUTSIDE THE CHICKEN'S SIGHT, AND IT WAS COLD ENOUGH ON ZARTOK 3 FOR IT TO SURVIVE WITHOUT HELP

YOUR TERMS ARE ACCEPTABLE. SO LONG AS THE LUMBERCHICKEN REMAINS IN POWER IN ANY FORM, WE WILL STAND WITH YOU AGAINST HIM!



THE "IN ANY FORM" PART MADE ME UNEASY, CONSIDERING THE PART OF SARANNA'S VISION THAT WOULDN'T CLEAR UP BUT ZHUPARR ASSURED ME AFTERWARD THAT THE TERM WAS USED JUST TO MAKE SURE ALL THE BASES WERE COVERED. AFTER THAT I STARTED PRACTICING MY NEW POWERS

AWAKEN, ELDRITCH SNOW WARRIOR



I DO NEED YOUR HELP! BUT YOU'VE GOT TO THINK FOR YOURSELVES! YOU'RE ALL INDIVIDUALS!

Like me!

yes! we're all individuals

MY ELDRITCH SNOWMEN TOOK WELL TO TRAINING DESPITE SOME INITIAL ISSUES

TRAINING THEM TO FIGHT EFFECTIVELY WAS ALSO TRICKY. THEY DIDN'T HAVE SUPER HOBBS' NATURAL WEAPONS FROM BEING A TIGER PERSON NOR HIS ELDRITCH POWERS. THEY DIDN'T HAVE KRALTAR'S NATURAL WEAPONS FROM BEING A CELESTIAL DINOSAUR PERSON, NOR HIS TRAINING. THEY DIDN'T HAVE SARANNA'S SPIRITUAL VISION. NOT THAT IT WOULD BE MUCH USE IN ACTUAL COMBAT. I THOUGHT I COULD GET AROUND THAT BY SHEER NUMBERS, SO I MADE AS MANY OF THEM AS I COULD.

EVENTUALLY WHEN CALLING UP AN ELDRITCH ENTITY FOR MY LATEST SNOWMAN, I DID THE EQUIVALENT OF DIALING THE WRONG PHONE NUMBER WHEN MY CONCENTRATION WAVERED

TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE! NOW, O GREAT SNOW DEMONS AND ELDRITCH ONES WHERE WAS I?



I ENDED UP REACHING A CELESTIAL YETI INSTEAD. HIS ORIGINAL DIMENSION HAD BEEN WRECKED BY THE CHICKEN IN MUCH THE SAME WAY BRIAN'S HAD BEEN. SO HE WAS MORE THAN WILLING TO HELP TAKE THE CHICKEN DOWN

JESUS HORATIO HELLO! COULD YOU HELP ME TAKE THE CHICKEN DOWN?



DEPENDS ON WHO'S ASKING!

Chr. Puth

IT WAS A GOOD THING THAT KRALTAR HAD TOLD US ALL THE REST OF THAT STORY ON OUR DOWNTIME SINCE THE OATH FROM IT PICKED HIS CURIOSITY HE DIDN'T WANT TO GIVE HIS TRUE NAME. INSISTING I CALL HIM SYLVESTER. IT TURNED OUT THAT HE AND SOME OF HIS CEL YETI FRIENDS KNEW KUNG FU AND THEY'D BE WILLING TO TEACH IT TO THE ELDRITCH SNOWMEN



NOW THIS POSITION IS...

ACCORDING TO SARANNA'S VISION THE ODDS THAT THE CEL YETIS WOULD KEEP THEIR END OF THE DEAL WAS 94% ASIDE FROM THAT SHE'D SPENT MOST OF HER TIME HERE RELAXING WHOEVER'D BE FOLLOWING US HADN'T ARRIVED YET, BUT SHE'D SPENT YEARS IN THAT DUNGEON AND TOOK ADVANTAGE OF BEING OUT OF IT SO DID KRALTAR



SUPER HOBBS SHOWED ME HOW ALL HIS SIX ELEMENTS WORKED BOTH SPAWNING THEM AND TURNING INTO THEM HIMSELF

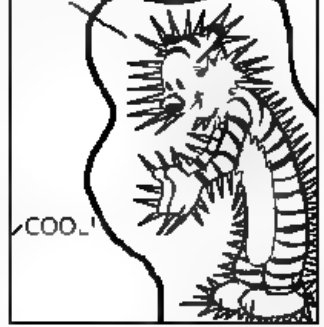
AND NOW I'M GIVING YOU A WEAPON OF WOOD!



IT WORKED! I'LL DEFEND MYSELF WITH IT AS BEST I CAN!



AND NOW I'VE CHANGED INTO PRICKLE ELEMENTAL FORM!



AND NOW I'M SPAWNING AIR UNDER MYSELF TO PJSH ME UP I DON'T HAVE TELEKINESIS, BUT IT'S THE NEXT BEST THING!

STILL COOL!

RUNESCAPE



IT WAS MUCH THE SAME WITH VOID HE COULD TAKE BRIEF SHORTCUTS THROUGH SPACE TIME WITH IT AS WELL AS HIDE FROM ANYONE) METAL AND BOOM USING BOOM TO BLOW HIMSELF UP AND THEN PUT HIMSELF BACK TOGETHER WAS BOTH DISTURBING AND AWESOME

I'M STILL HERE!

RUNESCAPE



THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES CHEWED HIM OUT FOR TESTING THAT UNTIL HE POINTED OUT THAT HE'D CAUSED NO DAMAGE THEY TOOK THE CONCEPT OF A SANCTUARY WORLD SERIOUSLY

IF ONLY THEY'D KNOWN THAT WHOEVER FOLLOWED US WOULDN'T TAKE IT SERIOUSLY

THEY'RE ON THIS WORLD! WHERE ARE THEY?

RUNESCAPE



AT LEAST MY ELDRITCH SNOWMEN DIDN'T HAVE THE VULNERABILITIES THAT BEING MADE OF SNOW WOULD NORMALLY GIVE THEM AND THE NEWEST ONES COULD MAKE ELDRITCH SNOWMEN THEMSELVES

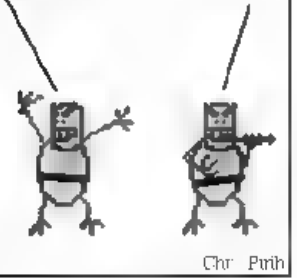


SOME OF THE SNOWMEN OR AT LEAST THEIR ELDRITCH HALVES HAD SOME MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING, AND WERE ABLE TO ADAPT CEL YETI KUNG FU TECHNIQUES FOR THEIR OWN USE IT'D ONLY BEEN A FEW WEEKS, BUT I HAD A DECENT SIZED SNOWMAN ARMY



GOOD! KEEP IT UP!

HERE'S HOW TO USE IMPROVISED WEAPONRY, LIKE THIS SKI POLE!



Chr Prit

WHILE THE ELDRITCH SNOWMEN TRAINED, I PICKED UP A FEW MORE SPELLS THAT WOULD BE USEFUL IN THE UPCOMING BATTLE SARANNA KNEW HOW TO OPEN UP A SCRYING PORTAL SO WE COULD KEEP TRACK OF THINGS FROM A DISTANCE

WHETHER DEAD PAST OR LIVING PRESENT, LIMIT NOT MY VIEW

SEE, CALVIN? IT WORKED

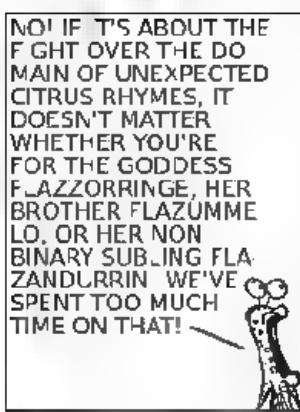
RUNESCAPE



KRALTAR FOUGHT THE BU REAUCRACY TO GET THE RIGHT TO HAVE ANTI-CEL BIRD AMMUNITION IN HIS LASER RIFLE SOLELY FOR SELF-DEFENSE PURPOSES. WE WERE FAR FROM THE ONLY ONES HIDING FROM OUR ENEMIES HERE NEUTRAL TERRITORY OR NOT

FINALLY! I CAN ACTUALLY USE MY WEAPON AS MORE THAN A FANCY CLUB!

RUNESCAPE



THE SNOW DEMONS ALTERED THE DEAL, WITH ME AFTER CONFERRING AMONG THEMSELVES THEY COULD SENSE THINGS WE COULDN'T, AND TAUGHT ME HOW TO SUMMON THE ULTIMATE ELDRITCH SNOW ENTITY IF THE FUTURE SHADOWS REMAINED UNCHANGED, THEY SAID I WOULD NEED ITS HELP, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS DANGEROUS

ZINCORCAL CAN DO MUCH! THE BIG Z!



AND DANGER WAS COMING HAS A SIX YEAR OLD HUMAN BOY NAMED CALVIN CHECKED IN HERE? I AM ON A MISSION FROM GOD!



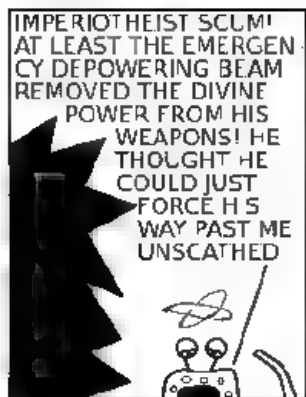
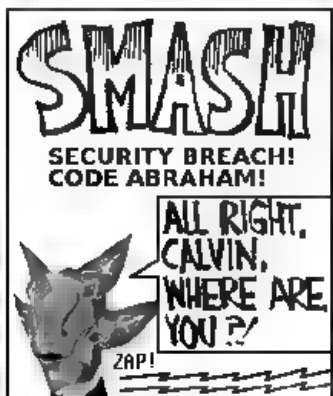
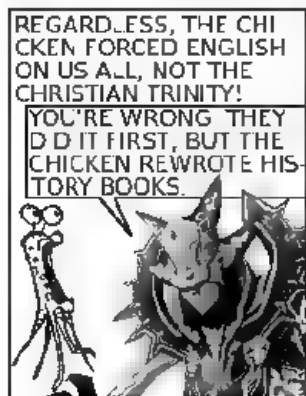
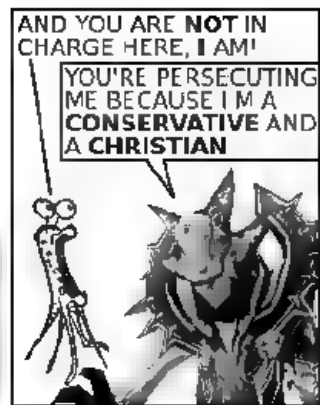
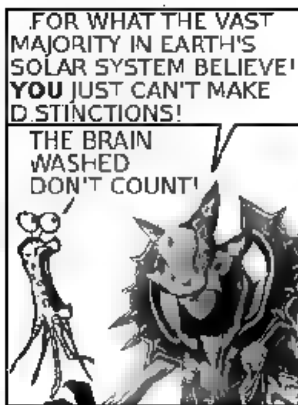
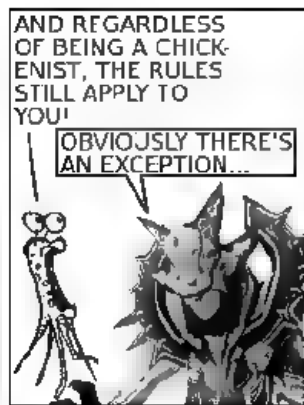
YOU AND SO MANY OTHERS

ALSO, THIS IS A NEUTRAL WORLD, WHICH MEANS THERE ARE RULES ABOUT WHICH WEAPONS YOU CAN HAVE HERE WITHOUT THE PROPER PERMITS! THOSE BLADES ARE DIVINELY POWERED AND VERY MUCH RESTRICTED! YOU'LL HAVE TO SURRENDER THEM FOR NOW!



MY GOD BESTOWED THEM UPON ME, AND YOUR TRYING TO RESTRICT ME IS IMPINGING ON MY RELIGIOUS FREEDOM!





ITS RANKS HAVE SWELLED MUCH FASTER THAN I THOUGHT THEY WOULD! I FIGURED WE'D GET A SMALL PRACTICE ARMY, GET TRANSPORTATION BACK TO EARTH, HIDE OUT THERE WHILE RECRUITING THE REST OF THE ARMY, AND THEN GO TO WAR! BUT I THINK WE'VE SUCCEEDED TOO WELL IN THE PAST MONTH!



YES, THAT WAS THE PLAN! BUT SEEING AS WHOEVER FOLLOWED US HASN'T SHOWN UP YET, WE'LL PROBABLY NEED AT LEAST SOME OF YOUR ARMY TO TAKE THEM DOWN!



AND I'M INCLINED TO AGREE WITH SARANNA. LEAVING AN UNKNOWN ENEMY HERE COULD RESULT IN MUCH COLLATERAL DAMAGE WE SHOULD KNOW WHO WE'RE DEALING WITH, EVEN THOUGH IT'S A GREATER RISK. ARE THERE ANY TROOPS WITH SPECIAL ABILITIES BESIDES SUPER HOBBS THAT WE COULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF?



THERE HASN'T BEEN ANYTHING ON THE NEWS ABOUT AN AGENT OF THE CHICKEN'S SHOWING UP HERE BUT THERE ARE A FEW SPECIALLY POWERED TROOPS, YES...



FIRST, ONE OF THE ELDRITCH ENTITIES IS ACTUALLY FROM WHATEVER DIMENSION AUNT WALBURGA IS IN. HE SAYS SHE SENT HIM TO HELP ME SINCE SHE COULDN'T COME HERSELF.



JIM DAVIS WATSON

SUPER HOBBS VOLUNTEERED TO KEEP HIM IN LINE, JUST IN CASE, AND HE'S NOT IN SNOWMAN FORM LIKE THE OTHERS. CLYDE? ARE YOU HERE? SHOW THEM!

HUH? WHAT FORM IS HE IN, THEN?



BURP

THERE HE IS! HE HAS PERFECT VISIBILITY TO ALL SENSES UNLESS HE WANTS TO SHOW HIMSELF, AND HIS BURPS AREN'T ORDINARY BURPS!



HE'S PARTIALLY VISIBLE TO ME, JUST LIKE SUPER-HOBBS WHEN HE USES HIS VOID POWER! SO HE MUST USE VOID IN A SIMILAR WAY!

HE SAYS HE LIVES IN VOID INSTEAD OF TAPPING INTO IT!



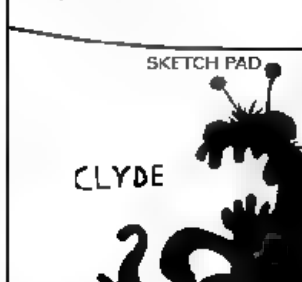
AND THAT'S WHY SUPER-HOBBS CAN SEE CLYDE, TOO! HE EVEN MADE A QUICK SKETCH FOR ME OF WHAT CLYDE REALLY LOOKS LIKE!



I'M CURIOUS MYSELF!

WATSON

IT'S MOSTLY A SHADOW, BUT IT SHOWS THE IMPORTANT BITS. AH, SEE NOW!



REGARDLESS, YOU HAVE BROUGHT A POTENTIAL SECURITY PROBLEM UP ON US! HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR AUNT WALBURGA WAS ACTUALLY THE ONE WHO SENT HIM?

SHE'S THE ONLY OTHER ONE WHO KNOWS THAT SONG WE SANG YOL!



I SUPPOSE THAT IS A PROPER IDENTIFIER, GIVEN MAX'S MUSICAL STYLINGS. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CLYDE'S BURPING, THEN?

WELL...



HIS ELDRITCH-POWERED BURPS WARD OFF ENEMIES! WHICH LEADS TO THE OTHER SPECIALLY POWERED ONE IN THE TROOPS. ELDRITCH ERDRICK.

THE ONE WHO KEEPS TALKING ABOUT HOW TOTALLY ELDRITCH HE IS BUT ISN'T ALL THAT POWERFUL?



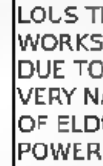
RIGHT!

WATSON

ERDRICK DOES HAVE SOME UNUSUAL IDEAS ON HOW TO USE CHI, THE POWER THAT KUNG FU IS BASED ON. AND HE FIGURED OUT HOW TO COMBINE CLYDE'S ELDRITCH BURPS WITH CHI TO MAKE THEM EVEN STRONGER! HE SHOWED THE CELYET'S, AND NOW THEY'RE TEACHING EVERYONE HOW TO DO IT!



SO WHAT IS THE PLAN FOR THIS? IS IT TO DRIVE THE CHICKEN AWAY VIA A CONTINUOUS PLANET-WIDE ELDRITCH KUNG FU BURPING CONTEST, OR SOMETHING EQUALLY RIDICULOUS THAT WORKS ANYWAY DUE TO THE VERY NATURE OF ELDRITCH POWER?



NO, IT'S NOT QUITE STRONG ENOUGH FOR GODS, AND I AS THEIR LEADER DON'T HAVE MUCH APTITUDE FOR CHI, AT LEAST NOT WITHOUT A LOT MORE PRACTICE. ALL I CAN MANAGE NOW IS THE ENHANCED BURP ATTACK!

STILL, IT IS ANOTHER WEAPON YOU HAVE.

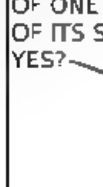


THE FINAL SUMMONING THE SNOW DEMONS TAUGHT ME SEEMS LIKE A BETTER OPTION FOR THE CHICKEN. IT'S COMPLICATED, THOUGH, AND I SHOULD HOLD OFF UNTIL IT'S ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. KRA-TAR, DO YOU STILL HAVE THE REMAINS OF THAT BUTT SOLDIER IN THE SHIP?



WATSON

DO, SINCE ITS DEATH RITUALS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED ON ITS OWN WORLD IF POSSIBLE. I ASSUME THE SUMMONING REQUIRES AN ENEMY OR THE REMAINS OF ONE AS ONE OF ITS STEPS, YES?



YES, AS WELL AS A FRIEND OR THE REMAINS OF ONE, A FEW MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, A CANTALOUPE (HE WON'T TAKE ANY SUBSTITUTES FOR THAT ONE), AND SO ON. IT'S A LONG LIST, AND WE'LL NEED TO MAKE A SUPPLY RUN TO FIND SOME THINGS ON IT!



ALSO, SARANNA, I LOOKED INTO WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT TRYING TO MAKE PEACE WITH THE FLYING SPAGHETTI MONSTER. AMI TABHA POINTED ME TOWARD HIS ASSOCIATE AVALOKITESH VARA, AND HE AND ERIS' MESSENGER ST. GULIK WILL SPEAK ON MY BEHALF!



THAT DOES CLEAR SOME OF MY VISION UP!

BUT THAT STILL DOESN'T SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF HOW TO GET THE ARMY WHERE WE NEED IT! SARANNA, DO YOU KNOW HOW TO OPEN ORDINARY PORTALS AS WELL AS SCRYING PORTALS?



BEFORE SHE ANSWERS, REMEMBER THAT ALL ORDINARY PORTALS ARE FORCED TO BE ONE WAY PORTALS OFF THIS WORLD TO PREVENT ITS INVASION!

REMEMBER! BUT IT CAN'T BE PERFECT, OR WE WOULD BE SAFE HERE.



AND RESUMMONING ALL OF THEM WOULD TAKE A LOT MORE TIME AND ENERGY THAN JUST MOVING THEM! I SHOULD KNOW! SORRY, GO ON.

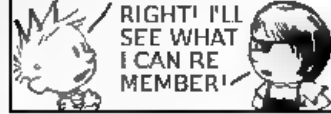
THERE IS A SPELL THE GOBLINS USE, BUT IT ALSO REQUIRES AN ENEMY'S REMAINS.



SUMMONING ZINCORCAL WILL CONSUME THE ENEMY'S REMAINS! DOES THE PORTAL SPELL DO THAT, TOO?

YES, UNFORTUNATELY. WAIT! IF THEY BOTH ONLY NEED SOME OF THE REMAINS, WE COULD DIVIDE THEM UP! I SHOULD CHECK TO MAKE SURE!

RIGHT! I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN REMEMBER!



WHOEVER ENDS UP FOLLOWING US WILL LIKELY ALSO LEAVE REMAINS AFTER WE KILL THEM. THE SITUATION IS NOT AS DIRE AS IT SEEMS ALTHOUGH IT IS GOOD TO BE PREPARED, SINCE WE DO NOT KNOW WHO IS COMING!



ASSUMING WE HAVE ENOUGH REMAINS, WHAT IF WE OPEN A REALLY SMALL PORTAL, JUST TO MAKE SURE WE CAN DO IT? IF IT'S TOO SMALL FOR THE ENEMY TO ACTUALLY GO THROUGH, IT'S A LOWER RISK!

THAT'S A GOOD IDEA!



WHILE WE FINAGLED WITH HOW TO MAKE A MINI-PORTAL, THE HUNT WAS ON.

IT'S SUCH A PAIN NOT BEING ABLE TO SEE THE THREADS OF PROPHECY HERE WHEN I'M GOING AT LIGHT SPEED! AT LEAST I CAN CLAIM RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION.



THESE PEOPLE HERE DON'T LIKE CHRISTIANS, BECAUSE THERE'S RIGHT AND THERE'S WRONG! AND ONCE I'M OFFICIALLY THE ONLY TRUE CHRISTIAN, I'LL ENFORCE IT PROPERLY! AND IF THIS GUY DOESN'T GET OUT OF MY WAY, I'LL

THROW HIM INTO THAT WALL!



NO! IT'S MORE FUN TO KILL! ONLY WISH I HAD GUNS INSTEAD OF BLADES!

SPURT!

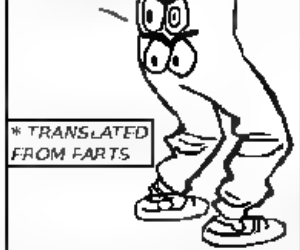


BACK ON EARTH...

WHY IS THE MISSION TAKING SO LONG? ALL HE HAS TO DO IS KILL A FEW KIDS, PLUS ANYONE ELSE IN HIS WAY! I'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE MYSELF FEEL BETTER! OKAY, I DECLARE COMMANDMENT 490648: THOU SHALT NOT COMBINE THE FLAVORS OF RASPBERRY AND CHITOLE!



("I WISH I KNEW HOW THE MISSION WAS GOING MYSELF, MY LORD.")



BACK ON ZARTOK 3...

GOOD! IT WORKED! WE HAVE PLENTY OF BONES LEFT, AND THIS PINPRICK OF A PORTAL IS A PROOF OF CONCEPT!

GOOD! THIS MEANS

ALERT!



LORD AND PROTECTOR THROCKMORTON YG HAS DECLARED PLANET WIDE LOCKDOWN! A SKY BARRIER HAS BEEN SET UP TO PREVENT



THE SUBJECT'S ESCAPE, SINCE THEY HAVE NO RECORD OF ARRIVING BY SPACECRAFT THEY ARE ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS! A SQUAD OF OMEGA FLYING LEATHERNECKS HAS BEEN DISPATCHED TO AID IN THE SEARCH.



THE TV NEWS BULLETIN SOUNDED OMINOUS ENOUGH, BUT THEN THEY CUT TO WHO THE SUBJECT WAS.

HERE IS AN IMAGE OF THE SUSPECT, ALONG WITH A VOICE RECORDING.



I AM A TRUE CHRISTIAN WITH MORALS!

RUNESCAPE

THAT'S DAD'S VOICE! WHAT'S GOING ON?!



APPARENTLY, MAX'S BROTHER IS MORE EVIL THAN EITHER HE OR I THOUGHT. SARANNA, CAN THE PORTAL BE SEALED OR ENLARGED BY ANY MEANS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE MORE ENEMY REMAINS?



NOT AS FAR AS I KNOW WE SHOULD JUST LEAVE THE PINPRICK OPEN FOR NOW, UNTIL THE THREAT IS GONE AND WE CAN ENLARGE IT WITH OUT LETTING HIM THROUGH. MAYBE SOMEONE ON THE OTHER SIDE WILL HEAR US, BUT THERE'S LITTLE WE CAN DO ABOUT THAT!



WHO KNOWS HOW POWERFUL HE IS NOW? I ONLY HOPE SUPER HOBBS AND THE ELDRITCH SNOW ARMY ARE ENOUGH TO STOP HIM ALONG WITH THOSE OMEGA FLYING WHATSITS THEY HAVE HERE!



WE'RE STRONGER THAN ANYONE THINKS! AND YOU HAVE A MENTAL LINK WITH US ALL, SO YOU KNOW HOW MANY OF US THERE ARE!

RIGHT! I SHOULD LET BRIAN KNOW, TOO!



BACK AMONG THE GHOSTS

I HAVE BAD NEWS, ACCORDING TO CALVIN'S LATEST TRANSMISSION, THE ONE WHO HAS FOLLOWED HIM FOR THE PROPHECY'S SAKE IS YOUR BROTHER, AND HE IS IN A NEW SUPER-POWERED FORM



DEAR GODS FIRST HE LATCHED ONTO THE CHRISTIANS AND HELPED THE RAPSHOOT ALONG, SO THAT ALL THE COMPASSIONATE CHRISTIANS WERE WIPED OUT! AND THEN HE SWITCHED TO THE CHICKEN! AND NOW HE'S MADE A DEAL WITH WHO KNOWS WHAT TO GET A BUNCH OF SUPER POWERS, SO HE CAN DO MORE KINSLAYING?!



DON'T FORGET, HE'S TARGETING MY SISTER TOO!

RIGHT, SLAYING IS SLAYING! AT LEAST THERE'S A DECENT SIZED ARMY BEHIND THEM BOTH!



AS THE SAYING GOES, "1704928654925919321-1935875680985029388-1929824491593257257-2306260038564433350-1625837644161501318-3244261246331763880-1423716890534360553-2306275247481866272." HE WILL GET WHAT HE DESERVES AT SOME POINT.



I HOPE SO! HE'S GOTTEN AWAY WITH FAR TOO MUCH!



Chris Puth BUT YOUR BRINGING JP YOUR EVIL GOD OF ETHNIC CLEANSING ISN'T A GOOD SIGN!



IT PARALLELS WHAT IS HAPPENING. REMEMBER, BEFORE HIS ASCENSION, HE WAS OF AN OPPRESSED GROUP

AND MY BROTHER THINKS HE'S OPPRESSED



BACK ON ZARTOK-3

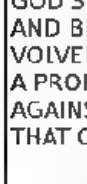
NICE WORK, SYL VESTER! NOW IF YOU CAN TEACH SOME OF THE OTHERS HOW TO ROCKET BURP, WE'LL HAVE YET ANOTHER ADVANTAGE!



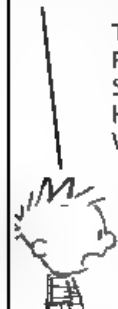
BURP!



I HAVE CONTACTED THE AUTHORITIES AND TOLD THEM WHO THEIR ENEMY IS AND HOW YOU AND SARANNA ARE LIKE THE TARGETS, HAVING ESCAPED FROM A GOD'S DUNGEON AND BEING INVOLVED IN A PROPHECY AGAINST THAT GOD



THANKS! ONLY HOPE WE'RE READY WHEN HE ARRIVES!



THE AUTHORITIES' REINFORCEMENTS SHOULD ARRIVE HERE SOON AS WELL



THE OMEGA FLYING LEATHER NECKS WERE QUICK TO ARRIVE



SUPER HOBBS'S TRANSFORMED INTO A METAL FORM, JUST IN CASE



I'M AS READY AS I'LL EVER BE

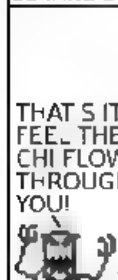
I PRACTICED MY BURP ATTACK, AND TAUGHT IT TO SARANNA, WHO HAD ABOUT AS MUCH APPTITUDE FOR IT AS I DID



BUR-UP-URPP!!



THE CEL YETIS AND ELDRITCH SNOWMEN PRACTICED THEIR KUNG FU. ALL THE CEL YETIS AND A FEW OF THE ELDRITCH SNOWMEN HAD PICKED UP ROCKET BURPING BY NOW



THAT'S IT! FEEL THE CHI FLOW THROUGH YOU!



KRALTA WENT INTO HIDING HE FIGURED THAT THE CHICKEN DIDN'T KNOW FOR CERTAIN HE WAS THERE AND HE COULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THAT FOR A SURPRISE ATTACK.

RUNESCAPE



Chris Puth

THE ARMY WAS BUILDING WAS THERE TO TAKE ON THE CHICKEN'S ARMY OF BUTT SOLDIERS PLUS ALL THE PEOPLE THE TRINITY BRAIN WASHED

I'D ORIGINALLY THOUGHT I COULD TAKE ON THE CHICKEN AS WELL BUT THE SNOW DEMONS SHOWING ME HOW TO SUMMON ZINCORCAL TOLD ME THAT THEY THOUGHT IT WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH, AND I WANTED TO MAKE SURE WE WON

I WASN'T OVERCONFIDENT, UNLIKE DAD THE OVERPOWERED SOLDIER WHOM WE'D BE GOING UP AGAINST AS A TEST WHEN HAD HE SWITCHED SIDES, OR CLAIMED TO HAVE?

I SUPPOSED WE'D FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH BECAUSE THERE HE WAS!

THERE YOU ARE, CALVIN! AND THAT HUSSY YOU'VE ASSOCIATED YOURSELF WITH IMMORTALITY AWAITS ME!



COME HERE AND DIE!

YOU'LL HAVE TO GET THROUGH all of us! ALL OF JS FIRST!



THE SHIPS DIDN'T RESPOND IN WORDS, BUT IN FIREPOWER

RUNESCAPE



SUDDON! SUDDON! SUDDON!

BLAM POW BLOOE BAM ZING BANG



HAH!

HIS TRANSFORMATION HAD APPARENTLY MADE HIM BULLETPROOF AT LEAST WE HAD PLENTY OF OTHER OPTIONS

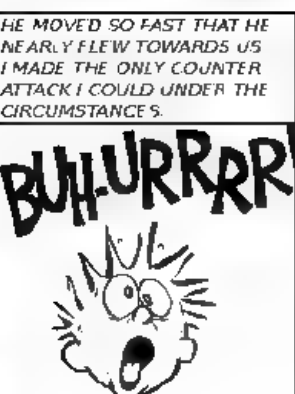
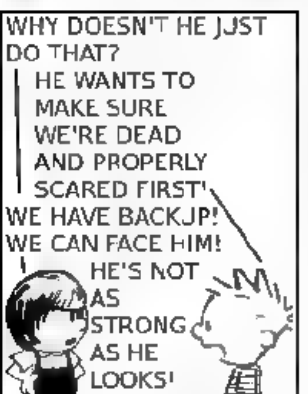
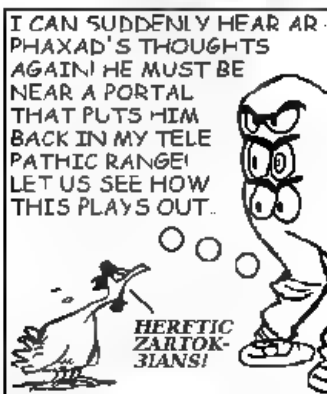
we have achieved proper posture! attack!



SUPER HOBBS LED THE WAY



SPROING!





SARANNA AND THE NEAREST INTACT ELDRITCH SNOWMEN JOINED IN. DAD WAS SUDDENLY BLOWN BACKWARDS. HE ALREADY SEEMED ODDLY ENRAGED AT NOT BEING ABLE TO MOVE FAST ENOUGH TOWARD US, BUT THIS MADE IT WORSE.

HOW DARE YOU HAVE UNHOLY ERUCTIONS IN FRONT OF ME!

RUNESCAPE



WHAT ARE ERUCTIONS?

LOOK IT UP IN THE DICTIONARY!



SARANNA SMILED KNOWINGLY, AND THEN WE ALL HEARD THE CHICKEN SCREAM FROM DAD'S HEAD.

COMMANDMENT 4975: THOU SHALT NOT REFER TO BURPS AS ERUCTIONS, FOR IT SOUNDS TOO MUCH LIKE 'ERECTIONS'.



THE CONVERSATION FROM DAD'S END CONTINUED OUT LOUD FOR A BIT BEFORE HE GOT HIMSELF ENOUGH UNDER CONTROL TO GO BACK TO THINKING HIS ANSWERS.

DON'T HELP HIM. I MUST USE MY ADVANCED VOCABULARY TO SHOW MY SUPERIORITY! ARGH! NO, LORD, I FOR GOT MYSELF.

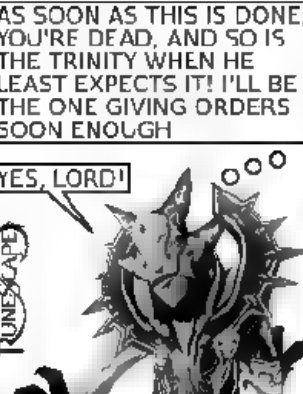


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! I AM THE SUPERIOR ONE. NOT YOU! FINISH THE JOB OR I'LL HURT YOU MORE!

YES, LORD. I WAS TREATING THEM AS ONE SHOULD TREAT UNDERLINGS PER YOUR EXAMPLE.



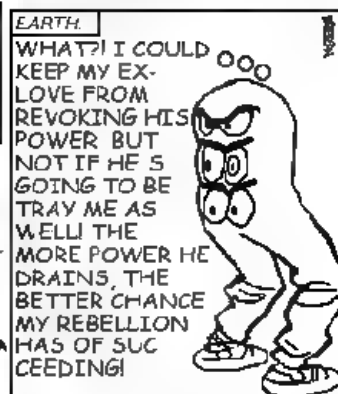
STOP FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE AND OBEY MY ORDERS! YOU'RE DRAINING ME WITH SO MUCH HEALING, PLUS THE ILLUSIONS! I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO GIVE YOU LIGHT-SPEED RIGHT NOW WITHOUT COMPROMISING SOMETHING ELSE!



AS SOON AS THIS IS DONE, YOU'RE DEAD, AND SO IS THE TRINITY WHEN HE LEAST EXPECTS IT! I'LL BE THE ONE GIVING ORDERS SOON ENOUGH.

YES, LORD!

RUNESCAPE



EARTH.

WHAT?! I COULD KEEP MY EX-LOVE FROM REVOKING HIS POWER, BUT NOT IF HE'S GOING TO BE TRAY ME AS WELL! THE MORE POWER HE DRAINS, THE BETTER CHANCE MY REBELLION HAS OF SUCCEEDING!



BUT SINCE I WAS THE ONE WHO SUGGESTED ARPHAXAD TAKE ON THIS MISSION, MY EX-LOVE WILL PUNISH ME! THE ONLY QUESTION IS, WILL HE PUNISH ME MORE IF HE FINDS OUT ABOUT IT...



FROM ME OR FROM ANOTHER ONE OF ARPHAXAD'S SLIP-UPS? I THINK I'LL KEEP QUIET ABOUT IT FOR NOW!



I KNEW THE TRANSFORMATION WOULD LOWER HIS INHIBITIONS, BUT THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO HELP HIM BECOME MORE LIKE HIS TRUE SELF! HIS TRUE SELF THAT WOULD SERVE ME BETTER!

* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS



ZARTOK 3...

PORTAL DETECTED! GUARD IT! SO HE CAN'T ESCAPE US! NG IT!

WHAT PORTAL?!



YOU, MY ILL-GOTTEN SON, ARE PUTTING EVIL THOUGHTS IN MY HEAD WITH YOUR ELDRITCH POWER!



I HAD NO IDEA WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT, BUT BLAMING EVERYONE BUT HIMSELF FOR HIS OWN FLAWS WAS PAR FOR THE COURSE WITH HIM.

I CAN HEAR YOU THINK IT AS WELL AS SAY IT! BUT I KNOW WHAT A CONTROLLED OR POSSESSED MIND FEELS LIKE, AND YOU HAVE NEITHER! SAVE YOUR LIES FOR MY EX-LOVE!



DAD SEEMED TO HESITATE FOR A BIT AS THOUGH HE WAS MENTALLY ARGUING WITH SOMEONE AT THAT POINT, KRA-TAR SAW HIS OPENING AND FIRED.

KHHH BLAM!



EEEEHHH!

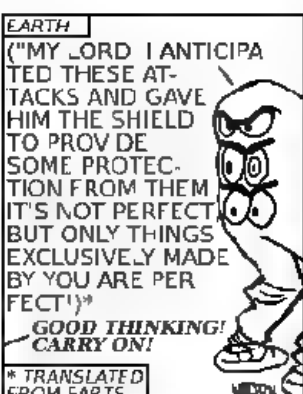
AFTER ALL THE PEOPLE YOU KILLED ON THE WAY HERE, YOU TRY TO BLAME IT ON HIM, WHOM YOU'RE CLEARLY TRYING TO KILL!



THAT WAS A MORTAL WOUND FROM A COLD-IRON WEAPON! I CAN HEAL IT, BUT YOU'LL HAVE NO SUPER-SPEED AT ALL UNTIL IT'S DONE HEALING!



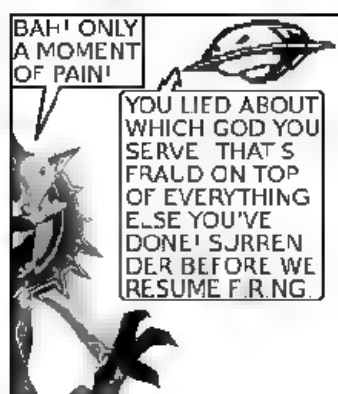
AS FOR YOUR MIND, I'LL CHECK. WHY DO YOU HAVE A MIND-SHIELD HIDING SOME OF YOUR THOUGHTS, SUSTAINED BY THE BUTT-VICEROY?



EARTH. (MY LORD, I ANTICIPATED THESE ATTACKS AND GAVE HIM THE SHIELD TO PROVIDE SOME PROTECTION FROM THEM. IT'S NOT PERFECT, BUT ONLY THINGS EXCLUSIVELY MADE BY YOU ARE PERFECT!)

GOOD THINKING! CARRY ON!

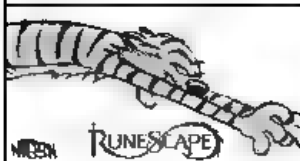
* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS



BAH! ONLY A MOMENT OF PAIN!

YOU LIED ABOUT WHICH GOD YOU SERVE. THAT'S FRAUD ON TOP OF EVERYTHING ELSE YOU'VE DONE! SURRENDER BEFORE WE RESUME F.R.N.G.

DAD KEPT PAUSING FOR SPLIT SECONDS. AS THOUGH HE WAS HAVING MORE MENTAL CONVERSATIONS. ASIDE FROM THE CHICKEN'S SCREAMING TO EVERYONE WITHIN RANGE WHEN HE BROKE ONE OF THE COMMANDMENTS, HOWEVER NO ONE COULD HEAR ANY OF THOSE CONVERSATIONS. SUPER HOBBS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF IT, AND LEAPED AT DAD AGAIN



BUT THIS TIME, DAD WAS BETTER PREPARED. FLYING OUT OF EVERYONE'S IMMEDIATE REACH THEN SWOOPING DOWN TO GRAB SUPER HOBBS FROM THE GROUND



NOW, DEMON TIGER, THIS 'S A SAMPLE OF THE PAIN MY ANTI DEMONIC ARMOR CAN INFLICT!



SUPER HOBBS HAD LET HIMSELF BE GRABBED BECAUSE FLYING UNDER HIS OWN POWER WITH AIR BEING IN METAL FORM, AND USING BOOM TO BLOW HIMSELF UP INTO METAL SHRAPNEL WOULD REQUIRE USING THREE ELEMENTS AT ONCE. AS FAST AS HE COULD SWITCH BETWEEN ELEMENTS, HE COULD ONLY USE TWO AT ONCE



GRRR! NOW I HAVE TO PULL ALL YOUR ARMOR'S POWER TO HEAL UP YOUR NEW DAMAGE! I'M RUNNING OUT OF VIABLE OPTIONS!



ALL YOU HAVE LEFT ARE YOUR INTRINSIC POWERS OF FLIGHT, BEING ABLE TO BREATHE IN SPACE, FEAR INDUCTION, AND SUPER STRENGTH! USE THEM WELL!



SUPER HOBBS NEEDED A BIT TO REASSEMBLE HIMSELF. IN CREDIBLY, DAD APPEARED TO BE UNAFFECTED, ASIDE FROM BECOMING EVEN MORE ENRAGED AFTER ANOTHER SPLIT SECOND HESITATION. HE SWOOPED DOWN DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF SARANNA AND ME STILL PUNCHING AWAY THE CEL YETIS AND ELORITCH SNOWMEN WHO TRIED TO SHIELD US. SEVERAL SNOWMEN HAD BEEN REDUCED TO UNRESPONSIVE PILES OF SNOW AND SOME CEL YETIS WERE NURSING MAJOR INJURIES, BUT THEY STILL FOUGHT

HE WAS USUALLY BEYOND REASON WHEN HE WAS LIKE THIS BUT NOT PREDICTABLY. SO I TOOK A SHOT AT IT (SARANNA'S AND MY BURPING ATTACKS. UNLIKE NORMAL BURPS, NEEDED RECHARGE TIME AS WELL)

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS, S NCE YOU TALK ABOUT CHOICE SO MUCH? THIS IS COERCION!



IT'S NOT COERCION, IT'S THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR ACTIONS! NOW LOSE THE ATTITUDE!



IT'S NOT AN 'ATTITUDE,' IT'S A FACT!



YOU'D BETTER SHUT UP, OR WE'RE GONNA PLAY EXORCIST BABY AND I'M GONNA SPIN YOUR HEAD AROUND!



THERE IT WAS. THE REAL DAD. READY TO INFLECT HIS REAL "CONSEQUENCES OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH" ON ANYONE WHO SAID ANYTHING HE DIDN'T LIKE

HE'D NEVER DROPPED THE MASK OF RESPECTABILITY IN PUBLIC AROUND NON-FAMILY BEFORE BUT HE'D NEVER BEEN TURNED INTO A SUPERPOWERED POWER DRUNK ABOMINATION BEFORE.

FOR THE MILLIONTH TIME. I WONDERED, IF ACTING LIKE THIS REALLY MADE HIM A PATRIOT, AS HE CLAIMED, WHY DID HE GO SO FAR OUT OF HIS WAY TO HIDE IT?

HE GRABBED A HOLD OF ME AND STARED AT ME WITH HIS NOW-MISSING EYES

HOW ABOUT I GIVE YOU A PERMANENT ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT? YOU KNOW WHAT I CAN DO AND GET AWAY WITH!



THE SNOWMEN AND CEL YETIS POUNDED HIM WITH THEIR LIMBS AND, IN SOME CASES, THEIR SKI POLES, BUT IT WAS TO NO AVAIL. HE WAS IN MY HEAD



SO EASILY FROZEN WITH FEAR! YOU'RE WEAK JUST LIKE YOUR MOTHER, EH RHONDA JUNIOR?



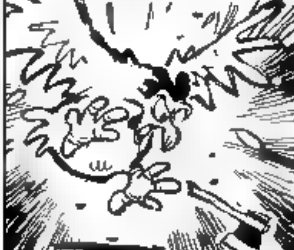
COMMANDMENT 82209: THOU SHALT ONLY USE "JUNIOR" WITH MALE NAMES, NEVER WITH FEMALE NAMES!



I MUST SHOW THAT I'M MORE OF A MAN THAN MY SON IS! SHUT UP BEFORE I SPIN YOUR HEAD AROUND.



STOP SHOWING OFF, FILL BOTH OF THEM WITH FEAR, AND THEN KILL THEM! DO NOTHING ELSE, OR FACE MY WRATH!



I WAS IN THE MENTAL EQUIVALENT OF QUICKSAND. FOR ALL OF HIS TALK ABOUT FEAR, I'D BEEN ABLE TO FIGHT IT OFF MANY TIMES BEFORE (OTHER WISE HE WOULD HAVE BROKEN ME YEARS AGO AND NEVER HAD TO THROW ME IN THE DUNGEON). BUT THIS LEVEL OF IT WAS NEW

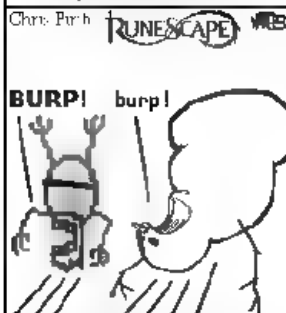
THE CEL YETIS AND SNOWMEN KEPT FIGHTING AS THEY SERVED MY CAUSE OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL. BUT DAD, AFTER GETTING SCREAMED AT BY THE CHICKEN AGAIN, FLEW TOWARD SARANNA THIS TIME

SUPER HOBBS HAD JUST FINISHED PUTTING HIMSELF BACK TOGETHER. BUT HE WAS TOO LATE TO STOP DAD FROM GRABBING SARANNA, FLYING TOWARD THE STRATOSPHERE, AND PUNCHING ONE OF THE LOCAL SHIPS OUT OF THE WAY

BREAKING YOUR NECK IS TOO EASY, APOSTATE! TRY HAVING YOUR AR SUPPLY SLOWLY CUT OFF WHILE MY SON HAS TO WATCH!



THE NEAREST MEMBERS OF MY ARMY STARTED ROCKET BURPING AFTER DAD AND SARANNA, IN HOT PURSUIT



SJPER HOBBS USED HIS AIR AND VOID POWERS TO FLY TOWARD THEM, TELEPORTING CLOSER AND CLOSER WHILE THE CRAFT DAD HAD HIT MADE AN EMERGENCY LANDING AS IT WAS APPARENTLY FATALY DAMAGED



SARANNA WAS MENTALLY FOCUSING ON A DEATH MEDITATION THE GOBLINS HAD TAUGHT HER WHILE REVIEWING THE HAPPIEST OF SUSIE'S MEMORIES THAT SHE'D ABSORBED DAD WAS INFURIATED THAT SHE WASN'T AS SCARED AS HE WANTED



I WAS TRYING TO REGAIN THE MOTIVATION TO MOVE PEOPLE NEEDED MY HELP! AND DAD HAD A LOT OF NERVE COMPLAINING ABOUT LACK OF FEAR!

"YOU WANT TO CALL CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES? A FOSTER FAMILY WON'T LET YOU HAVE ALL THESE NICE THINGS! GO AHEAD, I'LL HELP YOU DIAL!" THAT WAS THE SPIEL HE USED TO KEEP ME COMPLIANT NEVER REALIZING THAT I COULD EVENTUALLY USE THE SAME SPIEL WHEN HE WAS NONCOMPLIANT AND AT NURSING HOME AGE CONFIDENT TO THE POINT OF STUPIDITY AS USUAL

I TWITCHED A LITTLE MOVE MENT WAS COMING BACK NOW I NEEDED THE MOTIVATION TO HELP BOTH MYSELF AND SARANNA AGAINST DAD

THE ONLY MUNDANE ATTACK I COULD THINK OF THAT SARANNA COULD USE WAS FOR HER TO HIT HIM IN EXACTLY THE RIGHT SPOT OF HIS LOWER BACK AT AN UPWARD ANGLE IT'D HURT HIM EVERY TIME HE'D MOVE FOR A WEEK AFTERWARDS AND WOULDN'T LEAVE A MARK SHE WOULDN'T NEED MUCH STRENGTH TO DO IT; MOM CERTAINLY HADN'T WHEN SHE'D DONE IT TO ME A FEW YEARS BEFORE AND IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN AN ACCIDENT THEN

NO, THAT WOULD ONLY WORK IF DAD WERE STILL IN HUMAN FORM WHO KNOWS WHAT THE WEAKNESSES OF HIS CURRENT FORM WERE? BETTER TO AIM FOR HIS MASTER THE CHICKEN, UNLESS HE ACTUALLY WAS A SECRET CHRISTIAN BETRAYING THE CHICKEN GIVEN HIS OPPORTUNISM, HE JUST MIGHT BE



BUT I'M NOT I HAVE FULL MOVEMENT BACK NOW, EVEN IF IT'LL TAKE LONGER TO FULLY RECOVER PRAISE WHICHEVER POWERS MAY HAVE HAD A HAND IN HELPING ME! ER S OR AMITABHA, OR LIRANLOBOL! WAIT, WHO S THAT LAST GOD, AND WHY DID THEIR NAME POP INTO MY MIND? I'LL LOOK THEM UP SOON ENOUGH!



ALL OF THE ROCKET BURPERS CHASING DAD HIGHER AND HIGHER SUDDENLY CAME TO A STOP HOLDING THEIR POSITION IN MID-AIR WITH GREAT DIAPHRAGM CONTROL DAD TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO GLOAT



AND WHEN WE DO SO, MY PATH TO THE CHICKEN'S HEAVEN IS OPEN!



THERE MUST ALWAYS BE THOSE MORE FAVORED THAN OTHERS! THEY GET TO GO TO SUPER-HEAVEN AND LOOK DOWN ON THOSE IN ORDINARY HEAVEN AS PART OF THEIR REWARD! TOO OBVIOUS, UNBELIEVER!



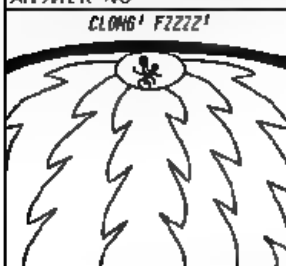
PREPOSTEROUS THERE IS ONLY ONE SJPER HEAVEN, RESERVED FOR THOSE WHO BEST FOLLOW THE HOLY LUMBER CHICKEN! AND THE TRINITY, TO ACCOUNT FOR OUR CHRISTO CHICKENIST CULTURAL HERITAGE!



GRRR! COMMANDMENT 102551 THOU SHALT NOT SPECULATE ABOUT SUPER-HEAVEN OR SUPER-HEAVEN, FOR THOSE ARE MINE ALONE!



I'D WONDERED WHETHER DAD KNEW ABOUT THE SKY BARRIER THAT THE NEWS REPORT HAD MENTIONED ONE SECOND AFTER THE CHICKEN SCREAMED AGAIN, I HAD MY ANSWER NO



THE BLOW THEY BOTH TOOK FROM THE BARRIER WAS ENOUGH TO MAKE DAD LOSE HIS GRIP ON SARANNA BUT SJPER HOBBS REACHED HER BEFORE TERMINAL VELOCITY



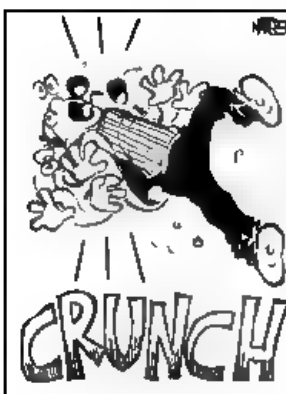
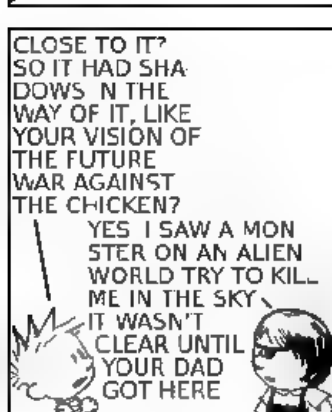
THE ARGUMENT BETWEEN DAD AND THE CHICKEN WAS OUT LOUD FOR ALL TO HEAR AS DAD FELL FROM THE SKY

NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT SUPER-SUPER-HEAVEN! IT'S ONE OF MY BEST KEPT SECRETS, AND YOU AND THE GIRL BLEW IT! THEN WHY DO YOU WANT TO PUNISH ME, WHEN NEITHER OF US KNEW? IT'S NOT FAIR! I'M REVOKING YOUR POWER AND LETTING YOU FALL TO YOUR DEATH! NOW THAT'S NOT FAIR! WHAT?!



HEH IF I SAID "IT'S NOT FAIR!" TO DAD, HE'D RESPOND LIKE THAT TO ME TOO LACK OF FAIRNESS WAS ALWAYS HIS THING AND IT WAS NOW HIS UNDOING

NO... I THINK I'LL LET YOU LIVE JUST LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO CRACK OPEN YOUR MIND-SHIELD AND SEE WHAT IT'S HIDING. IN THAT CASE THE TRINITY WILL RISE AGAIN! ...AND NOW I'VE TAKEN YOUR VOICE! BUT-JESUS FFWMET-CHEWING BUTT-CHRIST, I'M SICK OF YOUR EGOISTIC BLABBERING! I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO MATTERS!



I LOOKED AWAY I HAD NO IDEA ABOUT DAD'S HAVING A MIND SHIELD, BUT I FIGURED IT WAS A SIGN THAT HE'D EITHER TURNED TRAITOR OR HAD ALWAYS BEEN ONE TO THE CHICKEN

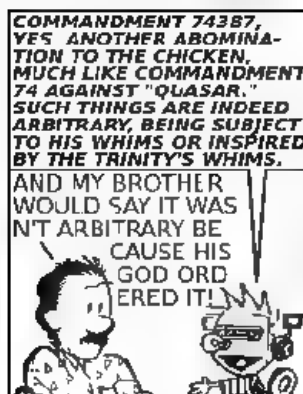
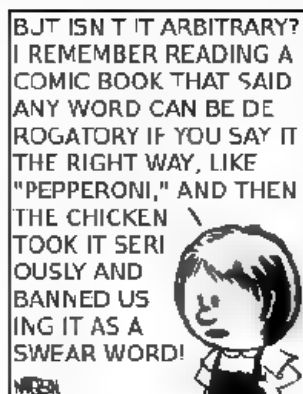
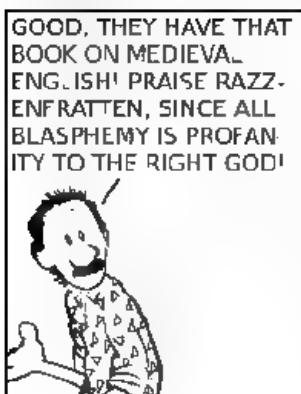
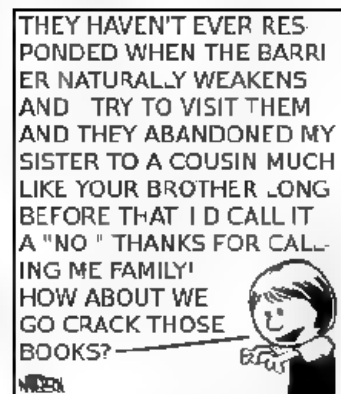
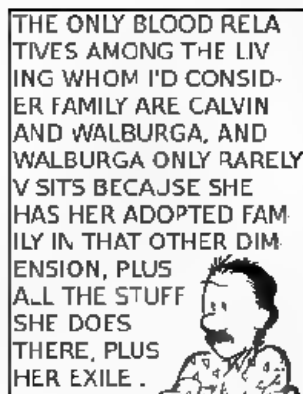
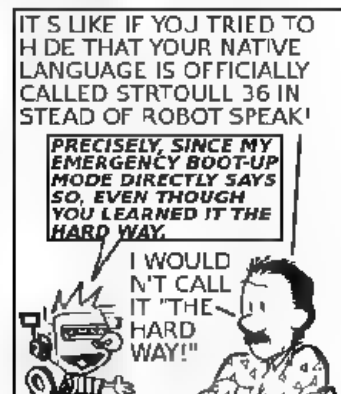
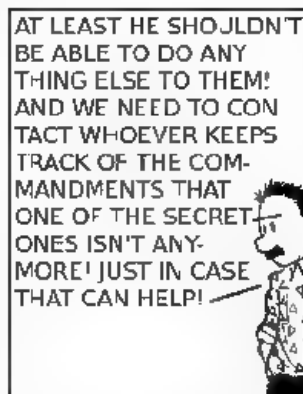
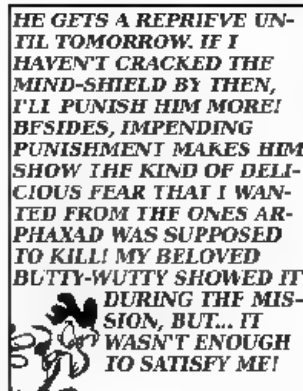
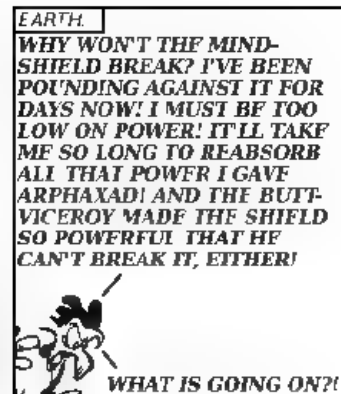
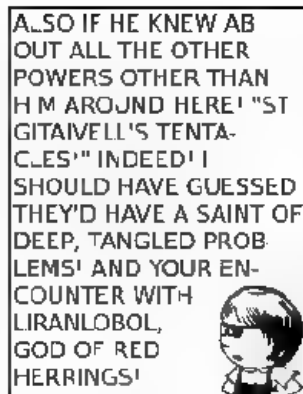
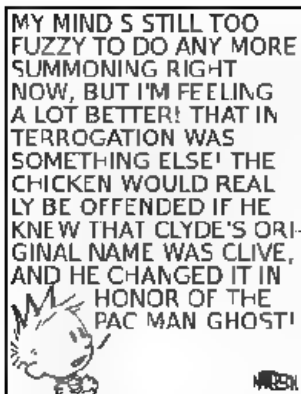
THE BATTLE WAS FINALLY OVER THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES QUESTIONED US ABOUT WHAT WE KNEW KRAATAR HANDED MOST OF IT SINCE HE'D APPARENTLY BEEN THROUGH SOMETHING LIKE IT BEFORE SARANNA WAS IN SHOCK I WAS IN SHOCK AND STILL SUFFERING MENTAL EFFECTS FROM DAD'S ATTEMPTED "ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT," AND SJPER HOBBS TOOK IT ALL IN STRIDE SOMEHOW

DAD WAS TAKEN TO A HOSPITAL AND THEY TRIED TO INTERROGATE HIM THERE BUT THE CHICKEN HADN'T JUST REMOVED HIS VOICE HE'D REMOVED ALL THE WAYS HIS FORMER SERVANT COULD COMMUNICATE DAD ALSO KEPT LIVING DESPITE FATAL INJURIES THE CHICKEN WASN'T DONE WITH HIM YET

WHY WERE YOU SO CALM WHEN DAD HAD YOU? I'D HAD A VISION CLOSE TO IT YEARS AGO.

CLOSE TO IT? SO IT HAD SHADOWS IN THE WAY OF IT, LIKE YOUR VISION OF THE FUTURE WAR AGAINST THE CHICKEN?

YES I SAW A MONSTER ON AN ALIEN WORLD TRY TO KILL ME IN THE SKY. IT WASN'T CLEAR UNTIL YOUR DAD GOT HERE



SINCE THE LUMBERCHICKEN'S ATTEMPT TO BREAK THE PROPHECY FAILED, ACCORDING TO CALVIN, THE FINAL BATTLE IS COMING UP, AND MORE WAYS TO BLASPHEME WILL HELP US!



AFTER SOME RESEARCH

OKAY, SO AN EASY ONE IS "THE DEMILURGE IS A PILFERED PINTLED SPOOR SARDER!"

"PILFERED" IS STOLEN, "SPOOR" IS POOP, WHICH SARANNA LEARNED AGAINST HER WILL, AND SARD.



IS A KIND OF MINERAL? BUT YOU'RE USING IT AS A VERB!

UH THE CHICKEN LOVES POOP, BUT HE GETS INSULTED BEYOND BELIEF IF YOU SAY SO THE WRONG WAY!

ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE? YIKES!



AH! IN MODERN LAYMAN'S TERMS, THE STATEMENT IS: "3880643764856541642-3724896710296296740-1893127025807309907!" ALTHOUGH IT SOUNDS MORE POETIC YOUR WAY!

I CAN'T WAIT TILL I'M OLD ENOUGH TO LEARN THE WHOLE TRUTH AND FINALLY LEARN YOUR LANGUAGE!

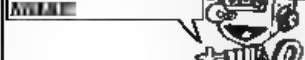


I'VE NEVER HEARD OF ANYONE TAKING THE TROUBLE TO MAKE WEIRD ALLITERATIVE BLASPHEMY BEFORE!

WE NEED AS MANY OPTIONS AS WE CAN GET TO TAKE DOWN A GOD!



I WILL INFORM CALVIN OF OUR BURGEONING RESEARCH... HE SAYS HE HAS ALSO READ THAT X-MEN COMIC ABOUT PEPPERONI, AND WONDERS IF MENTIONING NON-CHICKENIST HOLIDAYS CAN ALSO BE CONSIDERED BLASPHEMOUS. I BELIEVE SO... HE SAYS HE CAN THINK OF A FEW: DISORDIAN ONES LIKE SYADAY, COMIC-BASED ONES LIKE KLORDNY FROM THE LEGION OF SUPERHEROES, AND MUSIC-BASED ONES LIKE OUT OF TOUCH THURSDAY. HE WILL ASK AROUND FOR MORE.



HE IS ALSO SURPRISED THAT HE NEVER KNEW OF THE CHICKEN'S TURNING PEPPERONI INTO A FORBIDDEN SWEAR WORD, BUT ATTRIBUTES THAT TO HIS NOT WANTING TO DEFAME PIZZA TOPPINGS THAT WAY. NOT EVEN BLACK OLIVES, WHICH HE DISLIKES.

HUH! I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!



I'M ALSO SURPRISED THAT THE CHICKEN DOESN'T HAVE A COMMANDMENT AGAINST DEFAMING PIZZA TOPPINGS THAT HE ACTUALLY LKES, GIVEN HOW MANY COMMANDMENTS HE HAS REGARDING FOOD! BUT LET'S GET BACK TO RESEARCH!



ZARTOK 3

I JUST HAD A TALK WITH BRIAN! HE AND THE OTHERS THINK THE FINAL BATTLE IS NEAR, AND THEY'RE LOOKING FOR NEW WAYS TO BLASPHEME! I'LL HELP THEM SOON ENOUGH, BUT I'M WORRIED ABOUT THE ARMY!



YOU SAID SOME SNOWMEN DIED, AND SOME CELYETIS WERE INJURED BECAUSE THEY'RE MADE OF STRONGER STUFF, RIGHT?

RIGHT! KNEW THERE'D BE CASUALTIES, BUT DID I DO WELL ENOUGH AS A LEADER?



THE BAT WASN'T USEFUL AT ALL! I JUST FROZE, AND DAD GOT TAKEN OUT BY LUCK AND HIS OWN ARROGANCE!

THE ONLY WEAPON I COULD HAVE GRABBED WAS A FRYING PAN FROM THE KITCHEN, AND I GOT HELD CAPTIVE!



IF WE'RE GOING TO FIGHT EVIL POWERS, WE'LL NEED MORE THAN JUST A BASE BALL BAT AND A FRYING PAN! THAT'S WHAT THE BURPING POWERS HELPED WITH! MAYBE, I DON'T KNOW, PSYCHOKINETIC POWERS WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE USEFUL. BUT WE USED WHAT WE HAD!

MAYBE WE CAN LEARN ROCK ET BURPING, TOO!



WE DID BOTH LEARN IT EVENTUALLY BUT AT THE TIME, WE JUST WENT ON REASSURING EACH OTHER.

BESIDES, THE BURPING POWERS REQUIRE BOTH CHI AND ELDRITCH POWER, AND CHI ONLY FLOWS THROUGH LIVING THINGS, SO ONLY MAGICAL LIVING WEAPONS COULD BURP ATTACK WHEN THEY HIT!



RIGHT! AND I MAY HAVE BEEN PREPARED FOR THIS ONE BRUSH WITH DEATH, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'LL BE PREPARED FOR THE NEXT ONE! WHO KNOWS WHAT THE CHICKEN GOD WILL DO IN OPEN WAR?



I'LL GO RALLY THE TROOPS AS BEST I CAN, THEN! SEBASTIAN, CLYDE, AND TUNDRA TIBERIUS THE SNOWMAN DEFINITELY NEED COMMENDATIONS AS WELL AS

I'LL LEAVE YOU TO IT. SUPER HOBBS WILL BE BACKING YOU UP, TOO!



KRALTAR WAS STILL DEALING WITH THE LOCAL BUREAUCRACY. ZARTOK 3 HAD MAINTAINED NEUTRALITY BY PAYING EXTRA TRIBUTES TO THE CHICKEN, BUT HIS SENDING AN AGENT WHO IGNORED THAT SHOOK THE NATIVES DEEPLY ALSO. THEY HADN'T KNOWN A PROPHECY TO TAKE DOWN THE CHICKEN WAS INVOLVED BECAUSE KRALTAR HAD CONSIDERED THAT TO BE ON A NEED-TO-KNOW BASIS. NOT ANY MORE THE WAR AGAINST THE CHICKEN HELD IN THE BALANCE AND DAD WAS STILL STUCK IN HIS FROZEN STATE AT THE CHICKEN'S MOSTLY MISSING MERCY.

EARTH

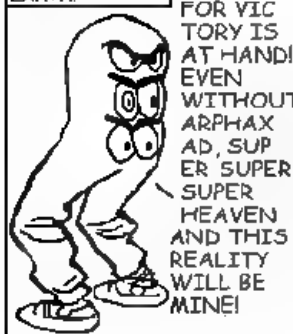
I'VE FINALLY CRACKED THE MIND SHIELD, IF ONLY PARTIALLY! BUT ARPHAXAD MUST BE OUT OF HIS MIND! HE THINKS HE CAN KILL ME WITH POWERS DRAWN FROM ME! AND HE WANTS TO KILL THE BUTT-VICEROY WITH THEM AS WELL! LIKE I WOULDN'T PULL THEM THE INSTANT HE TRIED ANYTHING! AND WHY WOULD HE KILL THE BUTT-VICEROY, WHO IS INFERIOR TO ME?



NO MORE SPECULATION! THE BUTT-VICEROY HAD A SEVERE LAPSE IN JUDGMENT PICKING HIM, BUT NO WORSE THAN THAT! STILL, SUCH A LAPSE REQUIRES A SPECIAL KIND OF PAIN! HE WANDERED OFF TO DO SOME ERRAND WHILE I WAS MORE FOCUSED ON THE BATTLE, BUT HE SHOULD BE EASY TO TRACK DOWN! IT'S NOT LIKE ANYONE LEARNED ABOUT SUPER-SUPER-HEAVEN! THEN I'D HAVE TO STOP HOLDING BACK ENTIRELY!

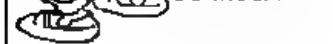


IN A HIDDEN LOCATION ON EARTH.



GATHER, MY ARMY, FOR VICTORY IS AT HAND! EVEN WITHOUT ARPHAXAD, SUPER SUPER HEAVEN AND THIS REALITY WILL BE MINE!

WE ONLY HAVE TO PRETEND FOR A LITTLE WHILE LONGER AND IF HE DIDN'T WANT ME TO BREAK COMMANDMENT 155201, HE SHOULDN'T HAVE TALKED IN HIS SLEEP SO MUCH!



ZARTOK 3

HAVE FINALLY COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE AUTHORITIES SINCE THE CHICKEN FIRST ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION RATHER THAN DIPLOMACY, THE PLANET IS DROPPING ITS NEUTRALITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF REMOVING THE CHICKEN A MOMENTOUS OCCASION!



DOES THAT MEAN WHAT I THINK IT DOES?

WE CAN USE THIS WORLD AS A BASE TO LAUNCH THE WAR AGAINST THE CHICKEN ON EARTH

AFTER WIDENING THE PORTAL, AND MOVING THE SCRYING PORTAL!



YES, AND THE FORMER IS NO LONGER ONE WAY, AT LEAST FOR ME, YOU, SARANNA, SUPER HOBBS, AND THE MEMBERS OF YOUR ARMY

GOOD! SUPER HOBBS SAID HE COULD TECHNICALLY USE HIS VOID POWER TO WARP PAST THE ONE WAY BARRIER ANY WAY!



WHICH HE CAN NOW DO LEGALLY YOU SAID HE WOULD HAVE TO BE PART OF BOTH THE BATTLE AND THE FINAL SUMMONING, YES?

RIGHT. AND I STILL NEED TO HONOR THE DEAD, AND GET IN THE RITUAL MIND SET!

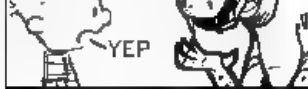


YOUR FATHER'S MENTAL ATTACK IS STILL AFFECTING YOU? IT COULD BE TIED TO HIS LIFE, FOR LACK OF A BETTER TERM! THE AUTHORITIES GAVE ME A CONTACT DEVICE TO NOTIFY ME IF HIS CONDITION CHANGES!



I SUPPOSE I GET HIS REMAINS WHEN HE DIES?

AS HIS CLOSEST LIVING RELATIVE, YES GIVEN HOW HE WAS WITH YOU, ACCORDING TO BOTH YOU AND MAX, I ASSUME HE IS A BETTER ENEMY FOR RITUAL PURPOSES?



USING HIM MEANS THAT SARANNA CAN USE ALL OF THAT BUTT SOLDIER'S BONES TO WIDEN THE PORTAL! THE SCRYING PORTAL DOESN'T NEED SUCH THINGS, BUT WE CAN'T TRAVEL THROUGH IT, OF COURSE!



THAT IS THE CONTACT DEVICE NOW! TO THE SCRYING PORTAL!

I'LL MOVE IT TO HIS LOCATION!

QUORP! QUORP! QUORP!



I'VE BEEN ABLE TO AIM IT AT EARTH THROUGH THE PORTAL, BUT IT'S TRICKY! AIMING IT AT THE LOCAL HOSPITAL THAT WE'VE ALREADY BEEN TO IS A LOT EASIER!



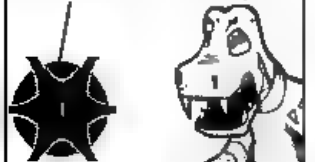
MY COMBINED TIGER AND DEMONIC HEARING CAN PICK UP HIS WHISPERING EASILY!

AS CAN MY CELESTIAL DINOSAUR HEARING! JHHH MY FAITH IS STRONG! I DIDN'T NEED MY HEAD SHOVED UP THE TRINITY TO BELIEVE



...UNLIKE SO MANY OF THE OTHERS! NOW I AM PERSECUTED LIKE CHRIST, WITH MENTAL TORTURE, BUT THE TRINITY'S SHIELD IS STILL MOSTLY INTACT!

BRAGGING EVEN NOW!



AND MY FAITH I'VE SEEN LET ME BREAK THIS BEFORE! THE CHICKEN'S CURSE OF SILENCE I AM GREAT!



THE CHICKEN CAN BE CARELESS AND BREAK MUCH MORE THAN HE INTENDS!

DAD'S NOT THAT BROKEN! HE ACTS LIKE THAT ALL THE TIME WHEN THERE ARE NO OUTSIDE WITNESSES! HMMM



AND SARANNA AND I CAN HEAR HIM JUST FINE! HE'S NOT WHISPERING ALL THAT QUIETLY!

BUT THE IDEA OF THAT KIND OF CONSPIRACY IS MIND-BOGGLING!



YEAH!

IT IS ODD THAT ONE BEING IS SUPPOSEDLY ABLE TO BRAINWASH OTHERS TO FOLLOW A DIFFERENT BEING, YES, BUT I'VE SEEN FAR WIDER THINGS! AND HE SEEMS TO HAVE GONE SILENT AGAIN! THE CHICKEN WILL NOT APPRECIATE HIS CANDOR!



ARGH!

SEE?

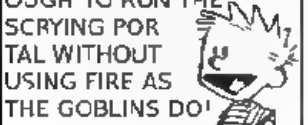
HE NEVER WENT OFF ABOUT BEING A SECRET CHRISTAN BEFORE! HE WAS ALL CHRISTIAN THEN ALL-CHICKEN WHEN THAT BECAME POPULAR! THE ONLY THING THAT STAYED THE SAME WAS HOW HE'D TERRORIZE THE HOUSEHOLD! I CAN ONLY IMAGINE HOW MUCH WORSE IT'D HAVE BEEN IF MELVILLE HAD BEEN BORN IN THIS REALITY!



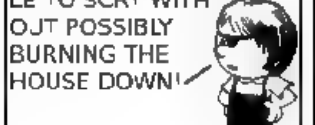
I WISH I'D BEEN THERE TO PROTECT YOU! EVEN AS JUST HOBBS, COULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING!



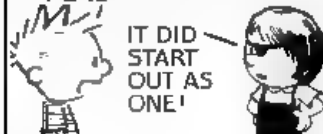
WELL, YOU'RE HERE NOW, OLD BUDDY! AND NEW BUDDY, SINCE ZHU-PARR COUNTS AS THAT! AND THINGS ARE LOOKING UP FOR US! WE CAN SCRY ON DAD TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S UP, AND SARANNA IS CLEVER ENOUGH TO RUN THE SCRYING PORTAL WITHOUT USING FIRE AS THE GOBLINS DO!



I'D LIKE TO SAY I'M CLEVER, BUT IT'S JUST AN ALTERNATIVE VERSION OF THE GOBLIN SCRYING SPELL FOR WHEN FIRE ISN'T READILY AVAILABLE! THERE'S NO FIRE PLACE IN THIS HOUSE, AND WE NEED TO BE ABLE TO SCRY WITH OUT POSSIBLY BURNING THE HOUSE DOWN!



AND THE HACHI HERE DOESN'T PRODUCE ENOUGH FIRE TO BE USED FOR BOTH HEATING THE HOUSE AND SCRYING! SO THAT'S WHAT IT'S CALLED! I'VE BEEN CALLING IT A HOUSEWARMING GIFT SINCE WE GOT HERE!



IT DID START OUT AS ONE!

GIVEN DAD'S PARTIAL RECOVERY, WE HEADED TO THE HOSPITAL GETTING THERE JUST IN TIME FOR HIM TO GET HIS REWARD FROM THE CHICKEN

HIS BODY JUST DISINTEGRATED, LEAVING NOTHING BUT A SKULL THAT'S SOMEHOW STILL ABLE TO TALK!
IT'S A DIVINE PUNISHMENT HE IS NOW A "SKULLICIDE," BEYOND ALL HELP.



UNCLE MAX TALKED ABOUT THEM!

DID HE MENTION THAT THEY HAVE A BRIEF PERIOD OF LUCIDITY BEFORE GIVING IN TO DESPAIR?



SUPER HOBBS WANTED TO CARVE DAD'S NAME INTO THE SKULL WITH HIS CLAWS SINCE HE THOUGHT HUMAN SKULLS LOOKED TOO MUCH ALIKE, BUT "ARPHAXAD" WAS LONG ENOUGH TO WRAP AROUND THE ENTIRE SKULL, SO HE SETTLED FOR CARVING "DAD" INTO IT

NO ONE EVER LOVED ME, NO MATTER HOW I THREATENED OR BRIBED THEM TO DO SO! I WAS TIED MY LIFE! I WANT TO DIE



KRALTAR HAD TO ARGUE WITH THE AUTHORITIES YET AGAIN THIS TIME ABOUT WHETHER DAD'S PUNISHMENT WAS ENOUGH JUSTICE FOR INJURING AND KILLING SO MANY PEOPLE, NOT COUNTING ALL THE PROPERTY DAMAGE HE DID

THE FACT THAT HE WOULD GO TO HIS ACCOUNT AS PART OF THE SUMMONING I'D SOON DO FIGURED HEAVILY IN THEIR DECISION TO LET US HANDLE IT THAT ALONG WITH THE FACT THAT WE WERE ALL HIS TARGETS AS WELL

WE PREPARED FOR WAR

EARTH

("I'M STILL WEAK SOMETIMES! AND I CAN SENSE ARPHAXAD IS A SKULLICIDE NOW! MY EX LOVE PROBABLY KNOWS EVERYTHING AT THIS POINT! EVEN IF NOT, WE WILL FIGHT HIM OPENLY! NO MORE HIDING!")*



* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

("HEAD FOR THE OPEN PLAIN A MILE OR SO FROM THE DUNGEON! WE WILL MAKE OUR STAND THERE!")*

ONWARD! WE SERVE THE TRINITY!



* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

SOON

THERE YOU ARE! AND YOU HAVE ALL THE GOOD SERVANTS WITH YOU? THAT MEANS NOTHING! HERE'S WHAT I OWE YOU FOR DIRECTING ME TOWARDS ARPHAXAD! PAIN!



PAIN LIKE NEVER BEFORE!

EVEN WITH MY NEW POWER LEVEL, I CAN'T RESIST THIS ENTIRELY!

("YOU DIDN'T O HAVE TO PICK HIM!")*



* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

WHAT? I DON'T HAVE THE POWER TO CAUSE MORE PAIN? I NEED MORE! YOU, GOOD SERVANT! TAKE THAT RAZOR YOU'RE HOLDING AND FLAY YOURSELF ALIVE WITH IT WHILE I WATCH!



FIZZLE!

NO! I SERVE THE TRINITY, NOT YOU!

DEFECTIVE! TRAITOR! APOSTATE! SOME OTHER GOOD SERVANT, TORTURE THIS ONE!



AFTER A FAIRLY LONG INTERVAL OF THE CHICKEN'S BEING TOLD "NO" MORE THAN HE HAD EVER BEEN SINCE HIS ASCENSION TO GODHOOD

SO ARPHAXAD WASN'T OUT OF HIS MIND! THE GREAT CHRISTIAN BACKSTABBING IS AT HAND



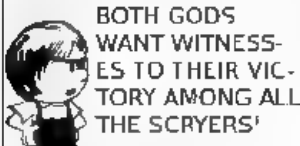
BUTT-SERVANTS! HERE TO ME! FLY AS FAST AS YOU CAN! UNLESS YOU'RE GUARDING SECURE LOCATIONS! YOU'RE THE ONLY BUTTS I CAN TRUST! HELP ME PUT DOWN THIS FOUL MUTINY!



I'VE HONORED THE DEAD AS BEST I CAN, THE ENTIRE ARMY IS PREPARED, AND EVEN THOUGH I'M NOT IN TELEPATHIC CONTACT WITH THE CELYETIS, THEY'VE ASSURED ME THEY CAN HANDLE THINGS!



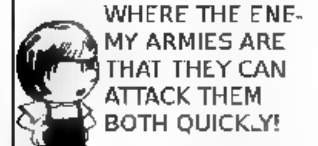
I'VE MOVED THE SCRYING PORTAL TO POINT AT EARTH AGAIN, AND THERE'S A STRONG PULL TOWARD ONE LOCATION, WHERE THE CHICKEN GOD THE BUTTV CEROY, AND ALL THEIR SERVANTS ARE! I GUESS BOTH GODS WANT WITNESSES TO THEIR VICTORY AMONG ALL THE SCRYERS!



LUCKY FOR US, INDEED I'VE DONE THE SUPPLY RUN TO ENSURE EVERYTHING FOR THE FINAL RITJAL IS AVAILABLE, ESPECIALLY THE CANTALOUPE. I'VE ALSO MOSTLY SOUNDPROOFED THE RITJAL ROOM, SINCE THE RITJAL REQUIRES PLAYING MUSIC, AND DON'T BELIEVE WE SHOULD TAKE UNNECESSARY CHANCES.



AND THE PORTAL IS AS WIDE AS COULD MAKE IT I WENT THROUGH ALL OF THE BUTT SOLDIER BONES, BUT IT'S BIG ENOUGH TO LET DECENTLY-SIZED GROUPS GET THROUGH TO EARTH! AND CLOSE ENOUGH TO WHERE THE ENEMY ARMIES ARE THAT THEY CAN ATTACK THEM BOTH QUICKLY!



BLAHHAH HOOP HOOP BOOLA ACKACKACK BOOLA

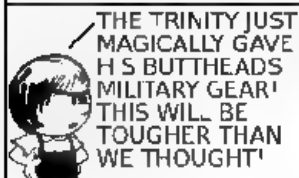


AFTER SUPER HOBBS AND I DID A QUICK RITJAL AGAINST EVIL GODS IN GENERAL IT WAS OFFICIALLY WARTIME

AT THE TIME IF I'D KNOWN ABOUT SCIMCOG A LOCAL GOD OF CORRUPTION, I WOULD HAVE EXPLICITLY GONE AGAINST HIM IN THAT RITJAL, BUT THINGS WORKED OUT ANYWAY

IT WAS MUCH LIKE THE TIME I NEEDED TO SUMMON A SWARM OF BEES BUT WHEN I NEEDED TO PLAY "FLIGHT OF THE BUMBLEBEE" FOR THE RITJAL MY BRAIN PULLED UP "THE SABRE DANCE" THE BEES STILL ARRIVED BUT THEY WERE ALL WIELDING TINY SABRES BUT I DIGRESS

I TELEPATHICALLY CONTACTED BRIAN AND TOLD HIM OF ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS, THEN SARANNA AND I WAITED FOR THE RIGHT TIME TO DO THE FINAL SUMMONING THE SCRYING PORTAL SHOWED A KIND OF BLOODBATH I'D NEVER SEEN BEFORE, I WON'T DESCRIBE IT IN ANY MORE DETAIL OTHER THAN TO SAY I'M GLAD WE PUT A STOP TO IT



THE TRINITY JUST MAGICALLY GAVE HIS BUTTHEADS MILITARY GEAR! THIS WILL BE TOUGHER THAN WE THOUGHT!

HOLY CATS, THERE'S SO MUCH BLOOD! SOME OF YOUR SNOWMEN ARE COLORED PINK BY NOW! I HOPE YOU GET THE SIGN YOU NEED SOON, BECAUSE ALL MY SARANNAVISON SHOWS RIGHT NOW IS SHADOWS AND FOG!



I SHOULD! I'VE NEARLY RECOVERED!

YOU DARE BETRAY ME BUTT-VICEROY? AFTER ALL I'VE DONE FOR YOU? AFTER I GENEROUSLY LET YOU LIVE INSTEAD OF TURNING YOU INTO POOP? AFTER ALL I'VE DONE TO LOVE YOU?



THE BATTLEFIELD...

("YOU HAVE LONG SINCE FORGOT TEN YOUR LOVE AND USED ME ALL THREE OF US FOR YOUR OWN NEEDS WHILE FORGETTING MINE OURS! I WAS WE WERE THE TRINITY, AND I... WE WILL NO LONGER BE DENIED!")*



* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

YOU CAN'T EVEN CHANGE FROM THE FORM I CHOSE FOR YOU! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO ME, YOU SINFUL TRIPLE BUTT-FACE? I'LL TURN YOU INTO SOMETHING FITTING FOR A TRAITOR!



WHAT? IT'S NOT WORKING?!!?!

("AM... WE ARE STRONGER THAN YOU THINK AND WHERE DO YOU GET OFF CALLING ME... US SINFUL? I... WE DEFINELY WHAT SIN IS! ALL YOU DID WAS HIJACK IT FOR YOUR OWN PURPOSES! JUST LIKE YOU DO WITH EVERYTHING!")*



* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS.

DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT SIN, YOU MORAL PRETENDER! YOU THREE SPHINCTERED... WHAT WAS HIS NAME? ... WORSE JUDAS THAN JUDAS! AND YOU STILL CAN'T SPEAK IN NON-FARTS, INFERIOR!



THE BATTLEFIELD...

("HOW DARE YOU COMPARE ME TO HIM, OR CALL ME INFERIOR! YOUR VERY HEAD CALLES YOU TO SIN! CUT IT OFF AND THROW IT AWAY! OR YOU CAN ENTER ME, AND I'LL MAKE YOU SERVE ME LIKE ALL THE OTHERS!")*



* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

THE ONLY PART OF ME THAT WILL ENTER YOU IS MY AXE BLADE! AND WHERE DO YOU GET OFF TRYING TO MAKE ME A SERVANT? I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOUR NON-BRAINWASHED ONES NOW!



THEIR AURAS ARE ALL LIKE ARCH-TRAITOR ARPHAXAD'S!

SARANNA AND I PLUS THE HORDES OF PEOPLE WITHIN HEARING DISTANCE OF THE TWO (WAS IT FOUR? GODS, WATCHED AS EVERY NON-BRAINWASHED CHRISTIAN INSTANTLY TURNED INTO POOP MAX HAD MENTIONED THAT ALL THE COMPASSIONATE CHRISTIANS WERE SHOT DEAD BY THE EVIL ONES IN THE FIRST RAPTURE. THE RAPSHOOT THIS WAS A SECOND RAPTURE, WHERE ALL THE EVIL CHRISTIANS-BY-CHOICE WERE ENPOOPIED TO DEATH BY THEIR GOD'S RIVAL IT WOULD LATER BE KNOWN AS THE CAPTURE

THERE WEREN'T MANY BUT THERE WERE MORE THAN WE THOUGHT THE ONLY CHRISTIANS LEFT WERE THE BUTT HEADS THAT THE OLD TRINITY HAD BRAINWASHED INTO IT, AND SINCE THEIR RELIGION REQUIRED FREE WILL

CHRISTIANITY WAS NOW OFFICIALLY EXTINCT



ASHES TO ASHES, AND POOP TO POOP!

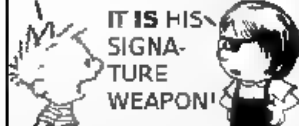
("YOU MASS MURDERING CLOACA-HOLE! IS POOP ALL YOU EVER THINK ABOUT ANYMORE? I WE HAVE MUCH MORE IMAGINATION THAN THAT! AS FOR GETTING OFF, YOU CAN'T DO IT FOR ME... US WITH-OUT A STRAP-ON!")*



* TRANSLATED FROM FARTS

NEITHER OF US HAD ANY IDEA WHAT THAT MEANT AT THE TIME

I GUESS HE HAS TO STRAP HIS AXE ON SOMETIMES, SO HE DOESN'T LOSE HIS GRIP ON IT? DROPPING IT WOULD BE BAD!



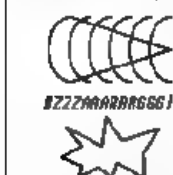
IT IS HIS SIGNATURE WEAPON!

I CAN STILL SPEAK IN NON-FARTS! IT JUST TAKES EXTRA STRENGTH TO DO SO!



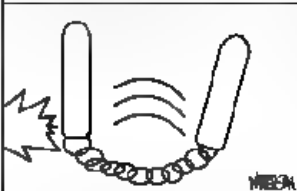
ACCORDING TO SARANNA WHO'D WATCHED SOME "HOLLYWOOD SQUARES" WHEN HER COUSIN WASN'T AROUND. THE TRINITY'S OWN VOICE SOUNDED LIKE A THREE VOICED EVIL ASTHMATIC PAUL LYNDEN

I'LL SHOW YOU STRAP-ON! BEHOLD!



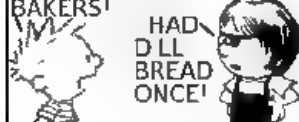
WITH THAT, THE TRINITY PRODUCED A BIZARRE HIGH PITCHED FART AND ALL THE EX-CHRISTIAN POOP STARTED MOVING ON ITS OWN

IT CONSOLIDATED INTO BLOBS IN MIDAIR THEN SEPARATED OUT INTO WHAT I THOUGHT AT THE TIME WERE ODDLY ROUNDED CYLINDRICAL FORMS, WHICH HARDENED INTO SHAPE THEN CHAINS APPEARED BETWEEN PAIRS OF THEM. THE TRINITY HAD MADE A MASS QUANTITY OF NUNCHUCKS



AT THE TIME, I FIGURED THE POOP HAD TURNED INTO SOME KIND OF WEIRD MINATURE AXE HANDLES, AND I KNEW ABOUT NUNCHUCKS BECAUSE OF THE NINJA TURTLES BUT THEN THE GODS ARGUED ABOUT WHETHER THE TRINITY'S "DILL DOUGH" WAS MORE SATISFYING THAN ANYTHING THE CHICKEN COULD PROVIDE

I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE BAKERS!



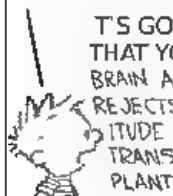
HAD I'LL BREAD ONCE!

MY GREAT AUNT USED TO MAKE STRAWBERRY BREAD UNTIL THE CHICKEN BANNED IT IN COMMANDMENT 37472!



I NEVER HAD THAT! IT SOUNDS GOOD!

I THINK I'VE FINALLY RECOVERED FROM DAD'S ATTACK AT LEAST OUR ENEMIES FIGHTING GIVES US AN ADVANTAGE!



IT'S GOOD THAT YOUR BRAIN ALWAYS REJECTS ATTITUDE TRANSPLANTS!

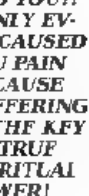
MY MENTAL LINK WITH SUPER HOBBS AND THE ELDRITCH SNOWMEN IS STILL UP, SO THEY'RE STILL UP AND FIGHTING THE NUMBER OF BUTTHEADS IS STILL HIGH, THOUGH, ESPECIALLY SINCE THEY'VE STOPPED HOLDING BACK AT ALL! THEIR WEAPONRY ONLY MAKES IT WORSE!

AT LONG LAST I WAS BACK UP TO SPEED ABLE TO CONCENTRATE WELL ENOUGH TO END THIS UNTIL THEN THE ONGOING FIGHT BETWEEN THE CHICKEN AND THE TRINITY ONLY ESCALATED

ALL THOSE WEAPONS YOU JUST MADE AND YOU KEEP HOLDING THEM IN MIDAIR? I DARE YOU TO THROW THEM AT ME!



YOU'RE TOO FOCUSED ON THE PHYSICAL! ALL THOSE COSMIC NIGHTS WE SPENT TOGETHER, CONTEMPLATING THE DEATH OF ALL OTHER GODS AND OUR ASSERTING ULTIMATE CONTROL? DID THOSE MEAN NOTHING TO YOU?!



I ONLY EVER CAUSED YOU PAIN BECAUSE SUFFERING IS THE KEY TO TRUE SPIRITUAL POWER!

SUFFERING THAT YOU GLEEFULLY INFLICT ON OTHERS BUT NEVER YOURSELF! ALL THOSE PEOPLE YOU TURNED IN TO THE WALLS FOR YOUR HELL? SO MANY OF THEM WERE GOOD CHRISTIANS! DID YOU CARE ONE WHIT FOR WHAT I WANTED WITH THEM BEFORE YOU WHIPPED OUT THE AXE?



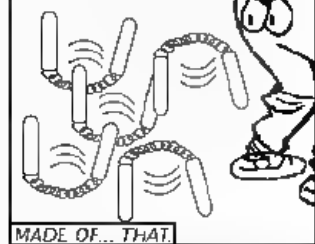
OH, STOP WHINING! I GAVE YOU NEW POWERS BY COMBINING THE THREE OF YOU INTO ONE, I LET YOU STAND BESIDE ME WHEN I CONQUERED THIS WORLD, AND THIS IS HOW YOU REPAY ME? STILL COWARDLY ENOUGH TO HOLD THOSE NUNCHUCKS INSTEAD OF THROWING THEM ALREADY?



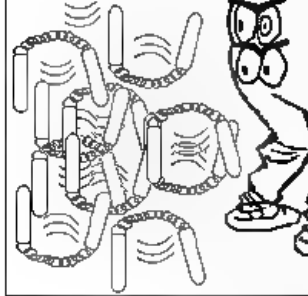
WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE A MERRY FOURSOME DROWNING THE UNBELIEVERS IN A SEA OF BLOOD FOR AS LONG AS WE WANTED, BUT YOU HAD TO GO AND RUIN THAT BY WANTING TO BE IN CHARGE AGAIN, YOU MOTHERLESS RECTUM! GO BACK TO FART-SPEECH BEFORE I PUNISH YOU!



I AM THREE RECTUMS, NOT ONE! AND I HAVE COME NOT TO BRING PEACE, BUT A LEGION OF NUNCHUCKS!



I WILL BEAT YOU INTO SUBMISSION AND THEN I WILL RULE OVER YOU!



NEVER! YOUR TELEKINESIS THAT COULD PULL MARS OUT OF ORBIT COMES FROM ME! THOUGH YOU CAN RESIST, I CAN CANCEL OUT MOST OF IT! AND NUNCHUCKS MADE OF THAT MATERIAL WON'T HOLD UP EITHER!



I AM NOT HOLDING THE NUNCHUCKS I'M INFUSING THEM WITH THE LAST OF THE POWER OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY! THE SAME POWER THAT HELPS ME RESIST YOUR ATTEMPTS TO WEAKEN ME!



CALVIN: I'VE GATHERED EVERYTHING! ARE THEY STILL POSTURING? DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW THOSE TWO BONDED AT ALL!



IT WAS TIME FOR ME TO DO THE FINAL SUMMONING THE TWO GODS WERE ABOUT TO FIGHT TO THE DEATH OF AT LEAST ONE OF THEM WHICH MADE THEM EASIER TO DEFEAT.

I'LL CREATE A PILLOW TO SMOTHER YOU WITH AFTER I WIN AGAINST YOU REGARDLESS! I WILL WIN!



YEARS LATER WHEN I UNDERSTOOD SO MUCH MORE I WATCHED A RECORDING OF THE LUMBERCHICKEN AND THE TRINITY TURNED-TRIPLE BUTT PERSON TELEKINETICALLY BEATING EACH OTHER WITH MASS QUANTITIES OF THEIR CHRISTIANITY-AND-GENOCIDE-POWERED POOP DILDO NUNCHUCKS.

IT WAS IMMENSELY SATISFYING TO KNOW THAT EVIL COULD EITHER DEFEAT ITSELF OR COME VERY CLOSE TO IT, AND I'D HELPED ENSURE ITS DEFEAT EITHER WAY

AT THE TIME I ONLY SAW A LITTLE OF IT AS I RAN FROM THE SCRYING PORTAL TO THE SUMMONING ROOM, AND I DIDN'T HAVE THE POWER TO BE IN MULTIPLE PLACES AT ONCE AT LEAST NOT THEN.

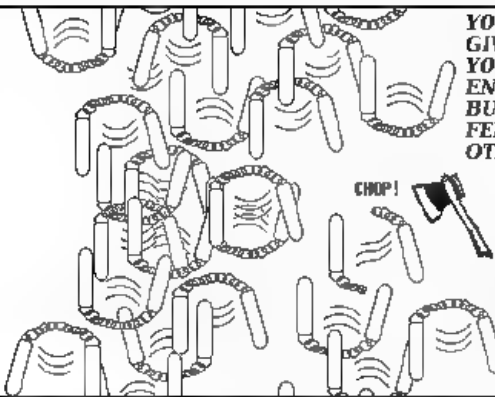


I MENTALLY SIGNALLED TO SUPER HOBBS THAT I NEEDED HIS PRESENCE FOR THE RITUAL HE WAS MOMENTARILY RELUCTANT TO LEAVE THE BATTLE BEHIND BUT HE DID. HE USED HIS VOID POWER TO BEND SPACE TIME AND TRAVEL DIRECTLY TO MY SIDE THEN I BEGAN PREPARING, WITH HIS HELP



SEE? I WE ARE STRONGER THAN YOU THINK! AS THE CHAIN BINDS THE TWO DILDOS OF POOP TOGETHER, SO DOES THE HOLY FART SPIRIT BIND THE BUTT FATHER AND THE BUTT SON TOGETHER! GIVE UP BEFORE I MAKE YOU GIVE UP!

THE BATTLE BETWEEN THE TWO (FOUR?) GODS RAGED ON



YOUR WINDY TRIPLE VOICE GIVES ME A HEADACHE, AND YOU'RE STILL NOT STRONG ENOUGH! I'LL CHOP OFF BUTT-JESUS' CHEEKS AND FEED THEM TO THE OTHER TWO OF YOU!



THE FEUDING GODS THREW THE NUNCHUCKS AT EACH OTHER SO HARD THAT THE NUNCHUCKS WERE SOON REDUCED TO A USELESS SLURRY OF POOP AND METAL. THEY THEN TURNED TO TELEKINETICALLY BATTERING EACH OTHER WITH SPACE TIME ITSELF THAT RISKED CREATING A SINGULARITY AND CAUSING UNIMAGINABLE DESTRUCTION. ALTHOUGH MY ONLY KNOWLEDGE OF THE SITUATION AT THAT POINT WAS A PSYCHIC EMERGENCY BEACON FROM BRIAN'S ANSIBLE. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A TWIST

I WIN! SO MUCH FOR THE POWER OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY, YOU SIX FACED BUTTHOLE! HA HA HA HA HA HA! ...WAIT, I SENSE THAT ENERGY... NO FAIR USING YOUR RESURRECTION POWER! I'LL KILL YOU AGAIN UNTIL YOU STAY DEAD!



HOW LONG DO I HAVE? THREE DAYS IS THE SLOWEST... IN OLDER, BETTER TIMES, HE HAD A REFRACTORY PERIOD AS SHORT AS THREE MINUTES... I'LL MAKE YOUR BIG FINAL DEATH AS QUICK AS YOUR TIME BETWEEN LITTLE DEATHS! JUST YOU WAIT!



SARANNA KEPT WATCHING THROUGH THE SCRYING PORTAL. AT THE TIME SHE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND A LOT OF THE SAME THINGS I DIDN'T

SO THE NUNCHUCKS ARE MADE OF BOTH POOP AND DILLO DOUGH SOMEHOW? AND WHAT'S A REFRACTORY PERIOD? NO MATTER. I HOPE CALVIN CAN PULL OFF THE SUMMONING IN TIME!



I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED YOU'D TRY TO RESURRECT! YOUR BRAINWASHED ARMY STILL FIGHTS! EVEN SO, LOOK AT YOU NOW, AS HELPLESS AS A FETUS BEFORE YOU'D GIVE IT TRISOMY 16 AND FORCE IT TO ABORT! WAIT, THAT'S IT! THERE'S MORE THAN ENOUGH METAL HERE! THE LAST OF THE POWER OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY IS NOW... THE POWER OF TRUE ABORTION



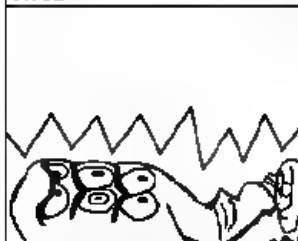
UNTWIST THE TRIPLE-HOOKED COATHANGER, AND NOW... THE POWER OF TRUE ABORTION COMPELS YOU TO DIE AND STAY DEAD, YOU WEAK TRINITY!



THANK THE GODS FOR THE CHICKEN GOD'S VINDICTIVE STUPIDITY! ALTHOUGH I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT ABORTION IS, AS DE FROM SOMETHING MY COUSIN WOULD RANT ABOUT!



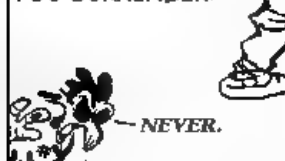
AFTER ONLY TWO AND A HALF MINUTES, A BRIGHT BROWN LIGHT SHONE FROM EACH OF THE DEAD GOD'S THREE BUTT HOLES, AND THE TRINITY WAS INSTANTLY HEALED AND REVIVED



THE CHICKEN WAS VIOLENTLY THROWN OFF, AND THE EX-CHRISTIAN-POWERED ABORTION WIRE BROKE IN HALF EACH HALF IMPALED ONE OF THE CHICKEN'S WINGS, AND THE WOUNDS KEPT BLEEDING



ONLY I HAVE THE POWER OF TRUE ABORTION! I'VE ABORTED YOUR TELEKINESIS AND GIVEN YOU STIGMATA! SURRENDER OR SUFFER MORE UNTIL YOU SURRENDER!



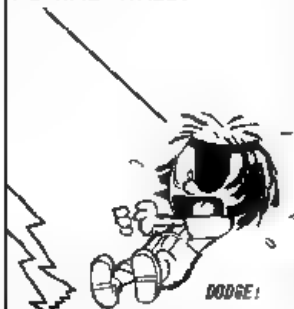
I'LL HAVE TO LOOK UP WHAT "OH GRAWL XES!" MEANS WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER! COME ON, YOU CAN DO IT, LOUIE! OR, SHOULD I SAY CALVIN



THE CHICKEN LASHED OUT WITH HIS REMAINING POWERS, NOT CARING WHO HE HIT HE PUSHED THE TRINITY BACK, AND HEIGHTENED ALL HIS SENSES OTHER THAN HIS EYES



THAT CAME RIGHT THROUGH THE SCRYING PORTAL! YIKES!



BACK AMONG THE GHOSTS
DESTRUCTION IS IN THEIR NATURE, OR, AS MY PEOPLE SAY,
3506127451293926097-
1948099654711217429-
1911322558699136876-
1890062983095237667-
1825504519250565666-
3087086527630022377-
2700438392796118948.



WAIT, MY ANSIBLE IS PICKING UP A POWER SURGE! ATTEMPTING TO DISCONNECT!
AAAAARRRRGGGGHHHHH



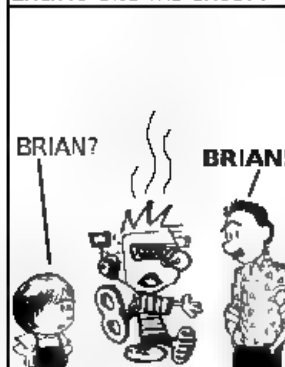
BACK IN THE RITUAL ROOM
OKAY, I'VE DONE THE RITUAL MUSICAL INTERLUDE WAIT, BRIAN'S SIGNAL'S BEEN CUT OFF! I HOPE SOMETHING HASN'T GONE WRONG!



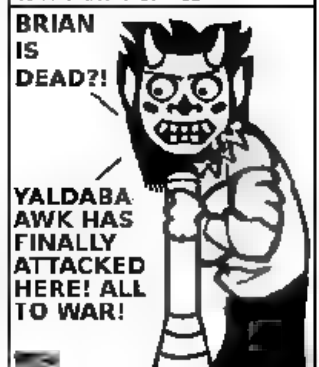
I HOPE SO TOO, BUT WE CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER! GRAB DAD'S SKULL AND HIDE IN STUFFED-TIGER FORM WE NEED BOTH A FRIEND AND AN ENEMY FOR THE NEXT PART OF THE RITUAL!



BACK AMONG THE GHOSTS



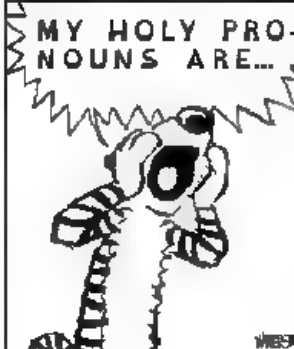
IN TIFFANY'S OFFICE



BACK IN THE RITUAL ROOM
WAIT, THAT WAS SARANNA SHOUTING! THE CHICKEN'S ATTACKING THROUGH PORTALS?



HE CLEARED HIS THROAT AND SPOKE IN A COLD VOICE...

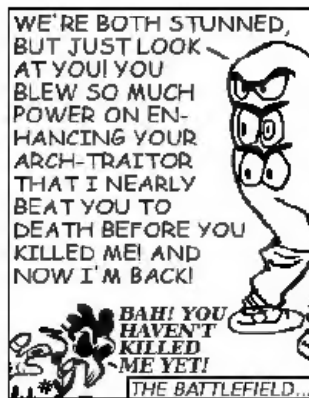


I COULDN'T DISTINGUISH THE NEXT TWO WORDS BUT THE EFFECT WAS IMMEDIATE THE BLASTING SOUNDS IN THE BACKGROUND IMMEDIATELY STOPPED, AND I COULD HEAR SOME MILITARY AGENT OF THE CHICKEN SCREAM THAT HIS HELMET WAS MELTING OFF HIS HEAD



THAT SHOULD SLOW HIM DOWN FOR A BIT! I'LL GO INTO STUFFED-TIGER FORM NOW!

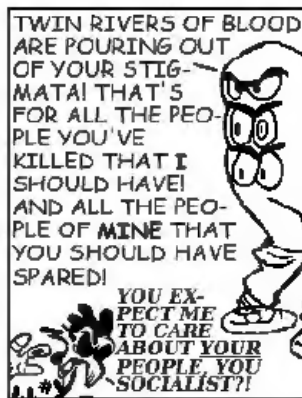




WE'RE BOTH STUNNED, BUT JUST LOOK AT YOU! YOU BLEW SO MUCH POWER ON ENHANCING YOUR ARCH-TRAITOR THAT I NEARLY BEAT YOU TO DEATH BEFORE YOU KILLED ME! AND NOW I'M BACK!

BAH! YOU HAVEN'T KILLED ME YET!

THE BATTLEFIELD...



TWIN RIVERS OF BLOOD ARE POURING OUT OF YOUR STIG-MATA! THAT'S FOR ALL THE PEOPLE YOU'VE KILLED THAT I SHOULD HAVE! AND ALL THE PEOPLE OF MINE THAT YOU SHOULD HAVE SPARED!

YOU EXPECT ME TO CARE ABOUT YOUR PEOPLE, YOU SOCIALIST?!



HOW... DARE... YOU... CALL... ME... THE... "S"... WORD?!! WITHOUT YOUR AXE, WHY DON'T YOU DO THAT HEART THING YOU USED TO DO? IF YOU CAN MOVE AT ALL!

I CAN! I'LL AIM FOR YOUR BUTT-MOUTH THAT CAN'T SHUT UP!



MY HEART GOES OUT TO... SPLAT!

YOU MISSED, AS ALWAYS! ARE YOU GOING TO CRY ABOUT IT AS ALWAYS, TOO?!

YOU, YOU...

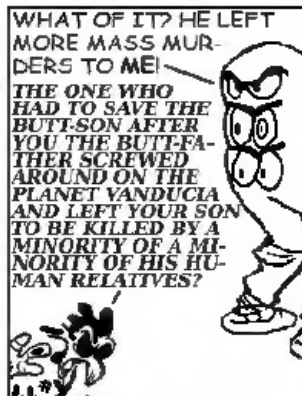
I'M ABOUT TO LEARN EVEN MORE NEW SWEAR WORDS!

WISDOM



I SHOULD GO BACK TO MY EX, OR THE BUTT-FATHER'S EX, THE DIVINE JANITORI!

THE ONE WHO ONLY COMMITTED ONE MASS MURDER WHEN HE FORGOT TO TURN THE RAIN OFF?



WHAT OF IT? HE LEFT MORE MASS MURDERS TO ME!

THE ONE WHO HAD TO SAVE THE BUTT-SON AFTER YOU THE BUTT-FATHER SCREWED AROUND ON THE PLANET VANDUCIA AND LEFT YOUR SON TO BE KILLED BY A MINORITY OF HIS HUMAN RELATIVES?



VANDUCIA WAS IMPORTANT! THE JANITOR AT LEAST CARED ABOUT US... MY SON! JESUS RESURRECTED HIMSELF AFTERWARD! AND WE WERE NOT BUTTS THEN! ...WAIT, HOW DO YOU KNOW THIS?

I INTER-ROGATED YOUR PRECIOUS JANITORI!



JUST BEFORE I TURNED HIM INTO MY VERY FIRST POOP GHOST! YOU ARE MINE, NOT HIS!

...!! MY TELEKINESIS IS COMING BACK! YOU'RE GOING IN ME NOW FOR THAT!

WISDOM



MY TELEKINESIS IS COMING BACK, TOO! TAKE THIS!

SPLURCH!

URKI *GASP*



THE POWER OF TRUE ABORTION MAY NOT BE ABLE TO STOP RESURRECTION, BUT IT CAN STOP YOU THE HOLY FART-SPIRIT FROM BRAINWASHING ANYONE, INCLUDING ME!

NO! I SHOULD HAVE DESTROYED THE PIECES!

WISDOM



IN TIFFANY'S OFFICE... ALL BRAIN-WASHED HUMANS ARE REGAINING THEIR FREE WILL, ACCORDING TO BATTLEFIELD REPORTS? LET ME SCRY ON THE BATTLE...



THAT'S IT! THE BUTT-VICEROY'S BEEN HIT RIGHT IN THE ONE WEAK SPOT OF ALL BUTT-PEOPLE: THEIR SHIRIKODAMA! ONE BUTT-SOUL OF HIS THREE IS NOW DAMAGED!



AND THE FART-SPIRIT THIRD OF HIM WAS THE ONE THAT WAS HIT, SO ALL FART-SPIRIT POWERS ARE FADING! THE NO-LONGER BRAINWASHED WILL DIE IF WE DON'T INTER-VEVE!



IF ONLY UNDOING THE BRAIN-WASHING OF BUTT-PEOPLE WAS THAT EASY! BUT THEY ARE WARPED IN BOTH MIND AND BODY, AND REQUIRE MORE EFFORT TO SAVE!

WISDOM



AND I CANNOT LEAVE MY POST TO ASSIST THE OTHER ONE IN THAT! BUT I CAN GIVE THE ORDERS TO SAVE WHAT LIVES WE CAN! AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I WILL DO!

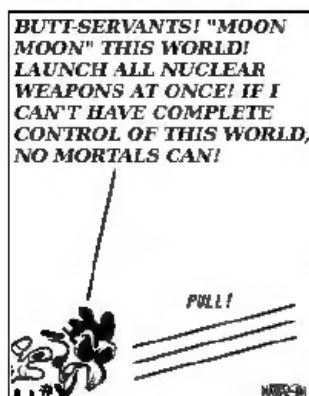


NO MATTER! I CAN BRUTE-FORCE MY MIND CONTROL USING BUTT-JESUS INSTEAD! NOW COME UNTO ME!

BZZZAAAAAGGG!

NOOO!

THE BATTLEFIELD...



BUTT-SERVANTS! "MOON MOON" THIS WORLD! LAUNCH ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS AT ONCE! IF I CAN'T HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL OF THIS WORLD, NO MORTALS CAN!

PULL!

WISDOM



WE'RE DOOMED! THE ELDRITCH SNOWMEN CAN'T REACH THE BUTT-SERVANTS IN TIME! IF SUPER-HOBBS WERE STILL ON THE BATTLEFIELD, HE COULD USE HIS POWERS TO REACH THEM AND EAT THEM, BUT HE ISN'T! WHO CAN STOP THE LAUNCH OR THE NUKES?!



EVERYTHING LAUNCHED. SARAINA CLOSED HER EYES AND WAITED TO DIE, BUT SHE SUDDENLY FELT THAT PRESENCE THAT CALVIN HAD TALKED ABOUT, AND THE SOUNDS OF THE LAUNCH WERE SUDDENLY DROWNED OUT BY CRAZY PEALS OF FEMININE LAUGHTER.

SHARS!



SHOUTS CAME FROM THE BATTLEFIELD THROUGH THE SCRYING PORTAL. EVERY NUCLEAR WEAPON HAD SOMEHOW BEEN TURNED INTO... TORTELLINI.

THE FLYING SPAGHETTI MONSTER AND ERIS DISCORDIA HAD JOINED FORCES, IF ONLY TO KEEP EVEN CRAZIER FORCES FROM BLOWING UP THE WORLD.

WHAT?! NO! WHAT?! YES!

BUTT-JESUS, REMOVE YOUR CHEEKS FROM MY HEAD THIS INSTANT!



HORRIFIC SHRIEKING FILLED THE AIR AS THE TWO (FOUR?) WILLS FOUGHT FOR SUPREMACY. SARANNA WATCHED THE STRUGGLE, KNOWING THAT THIS WAS THE MOMENT OF TRUTH, AND CONTEMPLATING WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT.



I'VE PLAYED THE RITUAL DRUM SOLO! NOW I NEED TO DO THE RITUAL ANIMAL CALLS, BUT THEY'RE EASIER TO DO WHEN NOT LYING DOWN!



THE FIGHT BETWEEN THE CHICKEN AND THE TRINITY CAME TO A SUDDEN END.



WE ARE YALDABUTTAWK THE NUTTY BUTTY BIRD. DEFIANCE IS ANNIHILATION. FREE WILL AS IT HAS BEEN... IS OVER. FROM THIS TIME FORWARD, ALL WILL SERVICE... US.

THE NEWLY MERGED QUADRINITY GLARED, SNEERED, AND MAGICALLY SHOUTED LOUD ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE ON THE PLANET TO HEAR, NOW INEXPLICABLY SOUNDING LIKE AN ENGLISH-ACCENTED QUADRU-
PLE-VOICED EVIL ASTHMATIC PAUL LYNDE, EVEN THOUGH THE CHICKEN HADN'T HAD AN ENGLISH ACCENT.



IN TIFFANY'S OFFICE...



TA-WHOO! THAT'S THE LAST ANIMAL CALL! ...AT LEAST CHANGING THE SUMMONED CREATURE'S TARGET IS EASY!



NOW TO ADAPT THE OLD TECH WE USED ON THE CEL-DI-NOS TO ALL OF THESE MERE MORTALS! THEY ARE OURS FOREVER!



SUDDENLY, A METALLIC HALF-HELMET, RESEMBLING A CROWN OF THORNS ON ITS SIDES, MATERIALIZED OUT OF THIN AIR AND LATCHED ONTO THE HEAD OF THE NEAREST PERSON.
AFTER A FEW SECONDS, THEIR EYES TURNED BLOOD-RED, THEIR PUPILS CONTRACTED, AND THEY TURNED WORSHIPFULLY TOWARD THEIR NEW GOD.
THEN MORE HELMETS STARTED MATERIALIZING EN MASSE. ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE.
ONLY THE BUTT-PEOPLE WERE SPARED, BECAUSE THEIR BRAINWASHING FROM THE CHICKEN WORKED WITH THE NEW GOD JUST AS WELL.

IN TIFFANY'S OFFICE...



WHY ARE THE MIND-BINDERS WAVERING? WE SHOULD JUST KILL EVERYONE WHO CLAIMS FREE WILL INSTEAD! LET'S DO THAT!



BY THE POWER INVESTED IN ME BY THE MIGHTY AND AWFUL SNOW DEMONS, I SUMMON THE ELDRITCH HORROR ZINCORCAL!



THIS IS WHERE WE CAME IN...



A HECKLER SPOKE UP.



THE NEW GOD OPENED HIS BEAK AND ALL THREE BUTT-HOLES, AND PULLED IN ITS BREATH, HARD.



EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING WITHIN ONE HUNDRED YARDS WAS DRAWN TOWARD HIS... ORIFICES. IT SOON BECAME CLEAR THAT, AS THE TRINITY HAD BRAINWASHED PEOPLE BY SHOVING THEIR HEADS UP ITSELF, WHAT REMAINED OF THE TRINITY MEANT TO KILL PEOPLE THE SAME WAY.

THE FUSED DEMIURGE AND TRINITY HAD BECOME, AS IT SEEMED, AN INEXORABLE SINGULARITY OF BUTT-MURDER. HIS SUCTION RANGE WENT UP TO TWO HUNDRED YARDS, THEN THREE HUNDRED.

IT WAS ALL UP TO ME NOW.



THIS GOD'S POWERS OF CONTROLLING MINDS, OF RESURRECTING, AND OF HAVING ANY PRESENCE IN THE LIVING WORLD!



THAT WAS THE GIST OF IT. I HAD TO NEGOTIATE WITH REGARD TO THE NEW GOD'S POTENTIAL FOLLOWERS, SINCE HE WAS NOT GUARANTEED TO RETAIN ALL WORSHIPPERS THAT BOTH ORIGINAL GODS HAD HAD.

I SETTLED ON HAVING HIM EAT THE ONES WHO WERE INCLINED TO WORSHIP THE NEW GOD AND WHO WERE SO CLOSE TO HIM THAT THEY WERE LIKELY TO BE EATEN BY ACCIDENT ANYWAY. BEING MORE SPECIFIC THAN THAT WOULD LEAD TO PROBLEMS.

THIS GOD WHO NAMES HIMSELF YALDABUTTAWK! AMEN, SO MOTE IT BE, FNORD, KLAZOOGA, AND BON APPETIT! GO NOW, ZINCORCAL, AND FEED!



MOST BRANCHES OF DISCORDIANISM USED "FNORD" AS A MAGIC WORD. THE BRAZEN EIGHT SECT TREATED THE NUMBER EIGHT AS THE KEY TO EVERYTHING, INSTEAD OF THE NUMBER FIVE, AND ITS MAGIC WORD WAS "KLAZOOGA." I HAD HEARD TRACES OF ERIS' LAUGHTER OUTSIDE FOR WHATEVER REASON, SO IT SEEMED APPROPRIATE.



IT'S NOT LIKE THE WORLD NEARLY BLEW UP IN MY ABSENCE, RIGHT?

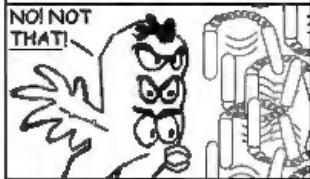


it is done. he was delicious, if a bit goney. much like the morsels surrounding him! bye, mortal!

I'D HEARD WHAT SOUNDED LIKE A LOUD "GLOMPI" SOUND OUTSIDE. I WONDERED HOW HUNGRY ZINCORCAL REALLY WAS, CONSIDERING HE WAS EATING SNOWMEN FROM HIS OWN DIMENSION WHEN I CALLED UPON HIM. THEN AGAIN, MAYBE I DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW, LEST THE PRICE OF LEARNING THE ANSWER WAS BEING HIS NEXT MEAL.

AS FAR AS I KNEW, IT WAS OVER. THE DEMIURGE, IN WHATEVER FORM, WAS DEAD, AND MONOTHEISM WITH HIM, BARRING SOME ODD CASES.

AN ONI MESSENGER FILLED ME IN ON WHERE YALDABUTTAWK ACTUALLY WAS: TRAPPED AS A GHOST, ALONG WITH THOSE FOLLOWERS EATEN ALONG WITH HIM, IN ZINCORCAL'S INTESTINE-DIMENSION. THE ONLY EXIT FROM IT WAS TO THE EAST OF WHERE HE WAS, AND IT WAS BARRED WITH AN IMPENETRABLE BARRIER OF THE WEAPON HE MOST FEARED.



NO! NOT THAT!

IN OTHER NEWS, THE CHICKEN HAD KILLED BRIAN. WHICH EXPLAINED WHY I HADN'T HEARD ANYTHING FROM HIM DURING THE RITUAL, ALTHOUGH I HADN'T BEEN FOCUSING ON HIM EITHER. HIS AFTERLIFE PAPERWORK HAD BEEN FILLED OUT IN ADVANCE, THOUGH, SO HIS GHOST GOT TO BE WITH THE SAME FRIENDS HE'D MADE IN LIFE.



VISITING THE LIVING WILL BE HARDER FOR US ALL NOW!

WE'LL FIND A WAY!

THE CHRISTIANS WEREN'T EVEN IN THE CHICKEN'S HELL. HE'D SENT THEM ELSEWHERE.

THERE WAS A THIRD KIND OF POOP GHOST NOW: THE ONES THE CHICKEN TURNED HIS ENEMIES INTO TO SILENCE THEM, THE ANIMISTIC GHOSTS OF ALL POOP, AND THESE: THE VIOLENT CONFORMIST CHRISTIANS TURNED TO POOP IN BOTH BODY AND SOUL.

THEIR AFTERLIFE WAS A PLANE OF PERPETUAL POOP, BUT THEY DIDN'T MIND, FOR WHAT THEY WANTED MOST WAS A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE WAS LIKE THEM AND ALL THEIR NEEDS WERE CATERED TO FLAWLESSLY.

THEY COULD ALSO FIGHT UNTIL THEY WERE ALL POOP-PULP AND HEAL UP AGAIN THE NEXT DAY.

♪ GLO-O-ORIA IN EXCRETA DEO... ♪

I'M NOT SURE THAT LATIN'S RIGHT... HOW ABOUT I DO THE CHRISTIAN THING AND BEAT YOU FOR TRYING TO CORRECT ME?!



THEY WERE FINALLY HAPPY. THE ONI SEALED OFF THEIR PLANE AND LEFT THEM THERE.

EXCEPT FOR ONE PARTICULAR CHRISTIAN, WHO SHOWED UP IN THE GHOST PLANE IN ONE LAST-DITCH ATTEMPT TO MAKE AMENDS. THE ATTEMPT WENT AS WELL AS YOU'D EXPECT...



MAX! BROTHER OF MINE! I WASN'T ACTUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ANYTHING I DID UNDER THE TRINITY OR THE CHICKEN! I SERVED THEM FOR THE GREATER GOOD, AND BY THE TIME I FOUND OUT THEY WERE EVIL, I COULDN'T BACK OUT! YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE ME AND FORGIVE ME! REMEMBER, IF YOU DON'T FORGIVE, YOU SHALL NOT BE FORGIVEN! DON'T TURN YOUR BACK ON ME! IF YOU DON'T FORGIVE ME, YOU HAVE NO MORALS!

GO AWAY. YOU'RE NOT MY FAMILY.

I STILL LOVE YOU! YOU WOULDN'T HAVE GONE THROUGH ANY PAIN OR SUFFERING IF YOU'D JUST ACTED THE PROPER WAY! IT'S YOUR FAULT, NOT MINE!



HE WOULDN'T LEAVE WILLINGLY. AN ONI SECURITY GUARD FINALLY SHOWED UP AND REMOVED HIM.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS NOW. NEITHER MAX, SUSIE, NOR BRIAN EVER SAW HIM AGAIN. ANYWHERE.

THE HOUSE I GREW UP IN, SO NEAR THE DUNGEON, WAS IN HIS NAME. MOM HAD LOST CLAIM TO IT WHEN THE CHICKEN TURNED HER INTO A BUTT-SERVANT, TO SAY NOTHING OF WHEN SHE DIED. AND HE'D DISOWNED ME WHEN HE'D THROWN ME IN THE DUNGEON. SO THERE WAS NO CHANCE OF ITS PASSING TO ME.

ALSO, THE SUCKING DAMAGE FROM YALDABUTTAWK'S MASS BUTT-MURDER HAD DAMAGED IT ENOUGH TO MAKE IT UNINHABITABLE.

THIS MEANT I HAD TO FIND SOMEWHERE ELSE TO LIVE. THE DUNGEON'S BEING UNDERGROUND SHIELDED IT FROM THE DAMAGE THE HOUSE HAD TAKEN. WITH THE DEMIURGE FINALLY GONE, THE GOBLINS WERE FREE TO MAKE THE DUNGEON A LIVABLE SPACE RATHER THAN A PRISON.



TELL ME MORE ABOUT THESE LAVA LAMPS!

LAMPS WITH MORE AESTHETIC THAN THE USUAL, AND IN A VARIETY OF COLORS!



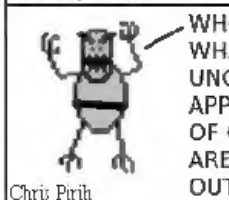
KRALTA LEFT AND FINALLY JOINED THE REST OF HIS PEOPLE. HE PROMISED TO STAY IN TOUCH.



BLONZZZ!

SEBASTIAN AND THE OTHER CEL-YETIS WENT BACK TO THEIR OWN DIMENSION, AS DID THE ELDRITCH ENTITIES ANIMATING MY SNOWMAN ARMY. THER'D BEEN A FAIR NUMBER OF CASUALTIES, WHICH REQUIRED MORE HONORING OF THE DEAD, BUT TAKING DOWN THE DEMIURGE WAS WORTH THE SACRIFICE.

SEBASTIAN PROMISED TO STAY IN TOUCH, TOO.



WHO KNOWS WHAT OTHER UNORTHODOX APPLICATIONS OF CHI THERE ARE? I'LL FIND OUT!

Chris Pirih

I HADN'T HAD MUCH TIME TO GET TO KNOW CLYDE, GIVEN HOW MUCH OF OUR TIME THE WAR HAD TAKEN UP, BUT IT WAS ABOUT TO CHANGE. HE MOVED INTO THE DUNGEON WITH SARANNA AND ME, AND WE ALL FOCUSED ON LIVING LIKE NORMAL PEOPLE. FOR OUR... MORE EXTENSIVE VERSION OF NORMAL.



I FINALLY GOT THE WILDFIRE IN MY SOCK DRAWER UNDER CONTROL!

DARE I ASK HOW A WILDFIRE STARTED THERE?



JOHN DAVIS

IT WAS THE END OF MY... OUR FIRST ADVENTURE. ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SO MANY MORE TO COME. THE NEXT ONE STARTED AWHILE LATER. WHEN CLYDE OFFERED TO TAKE US TO VISIT AUNT WALBURGA, WHOSE EXTRADIMENSIONAL EXILE HAD, OF COURSE, ENDED.



I AM NO LONGER ZARB! I AM NOW DIMENSIONALIST GHULZARBIS!

THANK YOU! THE BUTT-PEOPLE SAID THE SAME!

CONGRATULATIONS!



SO WHAT IS THIS OTHER DIMENSION LIKE, ANYWAY? I HAVEN'T SEEN ALL THAT MANY!



I SUPPOSE WE'LL FIND OUT!

I'M GOING HOME NOW!

THE END... UNTIL NEXT TIME!

JIM DAVIS